

Children
of Fancy

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J. B. S. Holborn 11

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CHILDREN OF FANCY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

JACOPO ROBUSTI, CALLED TINTORETTO
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHITECTURES OF EUROPEAN RELIGIONS
THE NEED FOR ART IN LIFE

CHILDREN OF FANCY

POEMS BY IAN BERNARD
STOUGHTON HOLBORN

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L'ENVOI

THE tide is now at the ebb and I hear it swirling among the rocks and regurgitating in ceaseless eddyings through the long weed, that waits with slender, tensile fingers to entangle and drag down some unwary swimmer. The wind is blowing in squalls, suddenly blackening the water and lightly carrying off the surface and blowing it to smoke; while behind me the grass and the young corn change in silvery patches with the passing gusts. But amid it all I see her little face, that with its great mysterious grey eyes still shines in undimmed beauty from the past, and to which these verses are dedicate. It was once, and it shall be again; the tide will return and the wind will fall away. I have not always known, but yesterday I climbed the Hills of the Mist, and shook the unyielding bars of the gates of Death; and then I knew;—What is one life in immortality?

But we wait and fret, and with impossible words

and forms struggle to capture the unattainable from a fate that has stolen the past and would withhold the future. Oh the pitiable futility of our 'striving and straining,' our 'desires and aspirations' and the endless reiterated yearnings of mood and spirit, sound and word, old as the sea and wind!

Yet this is art, this seeking to suggest and even realise that which we would have to be, that which with indomitable will we would force from fate's reluctant hand, ultimately indeed that which should rightly be; whether we call it from out the golden past, build it in the living present, or pursue it in some flying future; whether we present this hope, this suggestion of our realisation, in the sunshine and calm of a Pheidian marble or in the tossing passion of a violent storm.

It is not; no, it is not. But it shall be; it must be. Yes, if the heart is infinite,—it shall,—it must.
'Ο ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω.'

IAN B. STOUGHTON HOLBORN.

Isle of Foula.

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The cover-design is by the author.

'A much discerning public holds
The singer generally sings
Of personal and private things
And prints and sells his past for gold.
Whatever I may here disclaim,
The very clever folk I sing to
Will most indubitably cling to
Their pet delusion all the same.'

KIPLING

VISIONS

ALL in a fairyland of silvern haze
Dream-fancies hover in the quivering air,
Some dim and dark in close secluded ways,
Some glowing warm amid the noontide blaze,
But glamorous all, enticing to despair.

Black cliffs and castled heights rise vast and sheer,
And round their base in thunder rolls the sea,
While, through the mist, strange phantoms and
austere,
Fantastic, fill the trembling atmosphere
With whispering words for me.

Or lovely maidens, delicately white,
And boys fair-wrought, with joyous feet and
swift,
In one enchanted dance of shimmering light,
Passing all splendour vouched to mortal sight,
'Mid golden vapours ravishingly drift.

And amaranth flower and deathly asphodel,
Lotus and lily, countless blooms unnamed,
Pervade my senses as some mystic spell,
Where wild entrancing beauties ever dwell
In purity white-flamed.

While, clad in quiet passion and regret,
I sit and gaze 'neath overshadowed brow,
And finger round my neck the carcanet,
With mystic mirrors in each jewel set,
That flash the ancient glory even now.

In one vast pageant of stupendous things,
Beyond all else, doth Hellas draw my soul,—
The strains that Orpheus or Apollo sings,
Or Eros' fragrant lips and flaming wings
And burning aureole.

And Helen's self looks up to me and smiles,
More beautiful than even Homer sang,
Or Nausikaä's rippling laugh beguiles,
With yet more winning music and soft wiles
Than melodies of old time ever rang.

Dreams, as the artist drew them long ago,
They all alike in gleam or gloom outvie;

With wonders, such as these my visions know,
The poet's pages never yet did glow
Under the olden sky.

But, as I write, so cold they grow and dead,
As hollow ghosts of some exultant time;
My halting fingers spoil the magic thread,
And weave a pale reflection in their stead
Out of those forms transcendently sublime.

But ah! If such great dreamings come to me,
Who pen these fading fragments and obscure,
What blazing heights of sunrise they must see
Whose written words yet burn resplendently
And agelessly endure!

EDINBURGH

NARKISSOS

THROUGH the close stems I made my arduous
way

Until I came upon a limpid stream,
And wandered by it all the livelong day,
Or idly dabbled in its waters' play,

And wove a shadowy, dim, delicious dream ;—
Dryads and nymphs I fashioned at my will,
Who sang their lays to that low rippling rill.

When lo ! beyond my dreams, with plaintive cry,

I heard the fair nymph, Echo, sadly call :

‘Narkissos, O Narkissos ! pass not by

And leave me desolate alone to die ;

Have I not loved thee even more than all ?

Narkissos, O Narkissos !—never more

My sight shall vex thee, for my life is o'er.’

How beautiful she was as there she lay

Upon the sward, beside the waters clear,

Her wondrous hair spread wide in disarray :

The frightened nymphs abandoned their sweet play

And, on light feet, with startled eyes, drew near ;

Then, lest my sight should break upon their woe,
I passed adown the sad waves' murmuring flow.

At length the streamlet like a pool became,
And dark the width of waters wide increased,
Echo still calling, fainter, yet the same,
The soft sad cadence of that lovely name,
Until the dying lips in silence ceased;—
'Narkissos, O Narkissos! grant me this,
To seal my death for thee with one last kiss.

And lo! beyond the smooth and swirling flow,
I saw Narkissos' self above the tide,
As never mortal artist e'er may know,
Who kneeled upon the rock; and, bending low,
Drew forth a lily stem toward the side.
Ah, white the water flower! but oh! it palled
By that white form which met mine eyes enthralled.

The while I wondered rose a chilling air
On winds mist-laden, as with noisome breath;
And Nemesis drew near him unaware,
With ashen wings and lank unlovely hair,
More sure than fate and crueller than death;
And, 'neath the beeches of that woodland dell,
She laid on him her melancholy spell.

So, as again toward the stream he turned
And stooped to reach another lily bloom,
From mirrored lips within the wave he learned
The fires of love, and all his spirit yearned
To draw that image from the watery gloom ;
And, ever rising, back he turned again,
Torn by desire and unimagined pain.

‘ Oh, beauteous face, and all too haunting eyes,
That look with saddest longing through mine
own ;
Oh, come to me, if but for once,’ he cries,
‘ Ere heart-beats falter and the spirit dies,
And forth we fare upon the waste unknown :
Ah, quenchless heat of unconsuming fire
And yearnings of insatiable desire ! ’

In vain :—his prayers are scattered by the breeze
And flung afar across the empty sky.
How might the Gods of heaven grant him ease
Whom self and self-delight alone could please,
Dooming the loveliest of the nymphs to die ?
And still he loves and kneels there day by day,
While slowly wastes his life to death away.

EDINBURGH

OUTWARD BOUND

SOME day when all the work is done, I shall hie
me down to the shore
And bend my sail in my little white boat and
never return any more ;
Away and away with a following breeze I shall
sail away to the West
In my little white boat on a lazy tide to find me a
lonely rest.

And we shall pass where the pale moon sets and
the stars are awash in the sea,
A-seeking the lone release of my heart and escape
from memory ;
As I trim the boat to carry lec-helm and see her
idly go
And watch the great green oily swell, majestically
slow.

I shall never return any more to the things that I
leave so far behind ;
They shall keep a long look-out for me, when the
great all-knowing wind

Whispers its welcome song in my ear; and I
shall laugh at length
As I have not laughed in the slow mean years, to
the song of its growing strength.

Oh, the grand grey seas will bring me to rest on
the wide uncharted ways,
And I shall laugh and never return to the foolish
round of days,—
The loves that never my love might reach and
the achings that never were passed,
For I shall never return,—ah no!—when they gulf
me down at the last.

EDINBURGH

LOVE'S SACRAMENT

SOFT as the grey of twilight o'er the sea,
Yet with a light of lovelier mystery filled,
Your dear grey eyes tell love's infinity,
Here in the hush, when the loud day is stilled.

Come very near and place your little hands
Within mine own, and let me draw thee, Sweet,
And slow,—oh, slow,—as love's self understands,
Enfold thee close until our warm lips meet.

Then, as the lips uncloze and hands slip down,
Our eyes together turn to where he lies;
See,—on the white a wealth of sombre brown
Repeats the long dark lashes of his eyes.

Eros' own mouth, and pale translucent skin
Suffused with bloom of sunset on his cheek;—
Here is the mystery of the cherubin,
Soul thrills to soul, and the wild heart-beats
speak.

Come very near me, Sweet: love's cup o'erflows,
The pent fire seethes above the golden rim,
An ecstasy of commune none else knows,
When God's own life is breathed through us to
him.

Come nearer yet. Ah, Love, too much is this,—
I lose myself in thee; and at thy feet
Seal in one strained and passionate long kiss
Our perfect bond, the child has made complete.

NEWPORT, R.I., U.S.A.

BUTADES

‘Butades of Korinth is by some supposed to have invented modelling in clay, by using that material to fill in the outline, which his daughter had traced of her lover’s shadow on the wall. . . . The invention of the bronze foundry took place about the same time, bronze having been previously worked by a tedious and unsatisfactory process of hammering the plates into the required shape.’

WHAT would ye here? What have ye come
to say,
Ye children of a far-off latter day?
Here lies my dust beneath the fair wrought tomb,
Penned in a scanty womb,
And may, ere earth
Doth pass away, attain a second birth.
But this we know not; all is yet concealed,
Nor can it be revealed.
And thus I wait
The turning of the future leaves of fate.

What would ye know? It is in vain ye pry
Into the secrets of eternity.—
Whence have we come? and whither in our
flight,—
As the dark closing night

Shuts out the view
From those sad gazers after one they knew,—
Shall each find rest?
'Tis but an idle quest;
Nor shall your learning nor your knowledge show,
Nay, nor your wisdom find
The road we go,
Till fate remove the veil that makes you blind.

What would ye have? Is it the sculptured
stone,—
The stēlē that ye covet? 'Tis your own.
Or would ye gain, ye toilers in the vast
Unravell'd history of the long lost years,
One fact from out the past
That I may give,
Though dead and lying low, to you that live?
Swift disappears
Our fame; and I,—who then
Court'd the praises of my fellow-men
And paid in honour of the gods I knew
My service due,
Though now I know them not
In the sad void of Hades' gloomy clime,—
Pale to a shadow on the page of time,
As also will ye pale and be forgot.

Once was my heart lift up; did I not see
The door of triumph left ajar for me?—
I that had had no key,
Wherewith for some
The door flies open,—those that thither come
In gold, or birth, or in a wealth of friends,
Blessed beyond measure, and attain their ends.

The day was done, my tools were thrown aside;
Had I not tried
Throughout the weary hours
To realise the thoughts beyond my powers
In the too stubborn bronze? and there I bent
My head between my knees with toil forspent.
'Must I for ever fail
And naught avail,
Ever be Butades, unknown, obscure,
In golden visions rich, in all else poor,
Even my art's technique beyond my skill?'
And thus I sat, cast down, and mused until,
On looking up once more,
There met my glance
A youthful face upon the wall before,
In profile sketched on the smooth wall's expanse,
A sweet boy face verging on manhood's bloom
Lighting the narrow room.

I knew the boy
In his exultant joy,—
The head thrown back
In expectation and those pleading lips.
Somewhat it seemed to lack,
Where the brow dips
Into the hollow of those eager eyes,
In what most gave the living face
Its grace.
Oft had I watched the shadows gently play
Round those bright orbs, when the harsh daylight
flies
In the grey close of the departing day ;
While in the gloaming every shade and light
Melts into one harmonious delight.

How came it here ?
Was it not written clear
In the thing's self? Those lips upturned to kiss
Told their own story. This I could not miss—
'Twas for my child he yearned as he stood there,
And she the unspoken prayer
Had answered thus,
By fixing it, half jesting, on the wall,—
Love's summary of life for all of us,—
Where the lamp's shadow flung it; that was all.

I smiled, why should I not? I loved that face
Full fondly also—ah, that I might trace
Those perfect lines and moulded forms again
In my own art:—an empty wish and vain!
One moment—stay!
Here at my hand was clay,
Soft clay, that yielded even at a touch.
Had I not longed for such
Full often, when
The bronze rebelled against my hests, and
 then
Heartbroken I withdrew?
Here was there scope
To fashion all I knew,
And every hope
At length might reach fulfilment. Now at last
Would failure find its rest within the past.

Gently I creep—
The world all hushed in sleep—
Through the long night his image I recall,
There, with the clay upon the chamber wall.
The finely modelled brow
Is shading now
The mystery of the subtle forms below.
All 'neath my fingers grow,

Which next invest
With form the lips, half pouting, that suggest
The fires of love breathed through them, as he
turns

Toward her and his surging passion burns.
Then the throat,
Strained slightly, as the chin is lifted ; whence,
In ravishment intense,
There softly float
The wonder songs, that break the contour
lines

In their wild passage, as the soul's voice calls.
A narrow band confines
The hair, that falls
Massed in a splendour of luxuriant curves,
That for the delicate white shoulder serves
As a gem's setting in the circling gold.
There at the rising of the sun
'Twas done.

The world awoke once more, and lo, behold,
She found herself enriched ! A new-born art
Was given her. Swift did the rumour dart
Hither and thither, and my fame was made,—
The fame that all as swiftly seemed to fade,
And none knew Butades beyond those twain,—
Yet recked I not,—love and my art were gain.

Is it not even so?
Though all be spent,
And skill and thought and hoarded treasure go,
Yet are we still content
If, once alone
In a life's journey, we have raised man's lot
And given truth or justice or, more yet,
A beauty that he never can forget,
Though we be quite forgot
And utterly unknown.
For this we came, for this we gave our breath,
And wait the issue in the House of Death.

OXFORD

LOVE'S LAST ENDEAVOUR

HARK, the far-off murmur of pursuing!
Is it some first harbinger of evil,
Or do ears, benumbed by haunting terror,
So mistake a rain-plash for a footfall,
Wailing winds for cries of the avenger?
Do I hear them? No, they cannot follow.
See, the pathway dimly looms before us
As the dark stems open out and vanish,
Closing as a giant gateway after,
While we leave the forest for the moorland.
Louder ring the hoofs and ever louder:
Will they hear us, will they come and seize
thee,—
Leave me desolate, alone, forsaken?
Oh, my dead Love, speak; were't but a whisper
I should hear it far above the clatter
Of our progress o'er the broken pathway.
Open once those eyes, if but a moment,
One short moment longer than a life-time;
In it let me lose myself for ages.

Cold the wind blows, cold upon our faces,
But beneath my face the hot blood tingles.
Only thine is cold and cold for ever.
Hist, a sound!—'Tis but the frightened roe-deer
As we gallop strangely through the night-time;
Yet far faster THEY will swiftly follow
When they find that thou hast fled and left them,
View the lamps o'erset and, through the darkness,
All the white flowers scattered in confusion
And the peaceful chamber desecrated.
I can see them standing by the coffin,—
Neil and Duncan, anger on their faces,
Neil so silent, with his thin lips quivering,
Duncan, passionate with oath and gesture;
While the old man watching in the shadow
Mutters vengeance, with unaltered features.

Say but this at least, that thou forgivest:
I could meet them then and never falter,
Meet them and in that encounter perish,
Die for thee,—too late;—yet we together,
You and I, might step across that border
Where pursuit is vain and none might stay us.
Only tell me this, thou wilt forgive me;—
One cold kiss shall show I am forgiven;—
See, I take it in its icy sweetness.

Never more shall I renew the rapture
When that first time, 'neath the silver birches,
In thine arms my very being vanished.
Now the cold rain wraps us round completely,
Hugs us tight within its chill embraces,
Blotting out the full moon up above us,
Blotting out the heaven so far beyond it,
Lost to me, and lost perchance for ever,
In a pained eternity of yearning,
Crowded in my single human life hour.
So she lays her cold caress upon us,
Shrouds us in a seething whirl of vapour,
Sweeps the path, obliterates the hoof-track,
Fights on our side, shuts the way behind us.
Neil and Duncan chase perhaps this moment
Some vain phantom, or the Wolf of Badenoch.
Ha! how little will they guess that I dare,
I, the chief of one small lost sea-island,
Thus to snatch their lily-jewel from them.
Hardly would they deem myself a chieftain,
Who have lost my days among the South-lands,
Where the keen North air that stirs their
spirits
Is a rumour and a thing of hearsay;
And this hand, from warriors descended,
Learned to wield a chisel for a claymore;

And the left, with targe become a palette,
Knew no crimson save a purchased pigment.

But 'twas there I learned the charms and magic
They would gladly yield their pride to fathom,
Meant for thee, Love, had the ways been other.
There the black-robed sage of wizard-learning,
Living down the dark canals of Venice,
With his row on row of books and phials,
And mysterious spells and incantations,
Taught me what the wisest never knoweth.
See these philtres, sparkling blue and purple,—
One can stay all sickness and contagions,
Even, for a while, the days can conquer,
Holding the advancing years at distance,
Snatching youth again for one brief instant;
But the purple dealeth death in vapour,
All unseen and never to be conquered.

Yet how well I know each massy boulder,
Speaking through this murky omnipresence:
'Courage still, the flying path grows shorter.'
Often have they cheered me as I speeded,
Though what time I little needed cheering,
Thou before me: now, though thou art with me,
'Twere a mocking God would offer comfort:

Scorned the offer, met with maniac laughter.
Five short miles yet stretch away before us,
Down the hill and then the wild sea greets us,
Lifts us in its mighty arms and bears us,
Bids them hesitate who fain would follow :
But they still may come to intercept us,
Heat my hell yet sevenfold intenser,
Grind to powder what's already broken.

Ah! but, Love, my own, 'twas they who slew you,
You, who loved me so with purest passion ;
When they harshly dared to hold you from me,
Meting out to thee their cruel measure,
Even while they knew the fatal issue,—
Savage minions of their selfish purpose.
Sweet One, dost thou know how swift I hastened,
When from o'er the sea thy message found me ;
Day and night and night and day unceasing,
Onward pressing, every nerve at tension ?
Oh, to be in time and wrest thee from them
Suddenly, as lightning from the darkness,
So that ere they knew it we had vanished !
And the beauty of the clear blue fluid
Fashioned by the alchemist of Venice
Would have healed thee with its potent virtue.
But it might not be :—and all too late, Love,

All too late, when all was lost and over,
Stood I on the melancholy threshold.
Oh, the vacant void of utter anguish,
Empty, blank, unlimited, unfathomed,
With its cold, excruciating silence,
Soundless, windless, hopeless, and eternal!

Yet I could not leave thee with thy slayers;—
Dead or living thou wouldst be unhappy :
Even from the grave my heart would hear thee,
Calling me to come and take thee from them.
So it falls we ride this once together,
While the blue mysterious elixir,
E'en o'er death not wholly unavailing,
Holds the perfect fragrance of thy beauty
Fresh and fair a while, as though thou sleepedst,
Lying softly with mine arms about thee
Till its charm has run the time appointed.

See, the dawn is struggling up behind us,
Throws a sombre grey before us Westward,
And the sea grows momentarily distincter ;
Till the haven, where my boat lies ready,
Stays our way-worn course ; and, in compassion,
Doth the kindly deep receive my burden,
While at last the dreaded shore recedeth.

Let me wrap my cloak about thee tightly,
Lest the sea-spray chill thee with its kisses :
But thou feelest not those cold caresses,
Though the main-sheet makes my right hand tingle
And my left grows numb upon the tiller.
Deftly run we from the seas that follow,
Hungry as our foes to be upon us,
Veering, so that we receive them lightly,
As we would receive the haughty foemen,
Who in flank might vainly seek to take us ;—
Till at last the mainland rises gleaming
In the fiery dawning's incandescence,
Bathed in molten colour, half translucent,
As the sun peeps o'er the distant hill-tops,
And the island peaks ahead flush carmine,
Sharply limned against a dense blue heaven.

Safe we make the shore, we two together,
And I bear thee, as I long had visioned,
To my tower, perched high above the billows,
Where the sea-birds make the only music
And the waters roar a deep bass concord.
But I thought that we should pass in laughter,
Stepping warily where yawns beneath us
Yon abyss of many countless fathoms.
Yet thou smilest not : Love,—thou art silent,

Though I listen never so intently,
And, although the slippery cletts are traversed,
Treadest not along this mid-air pathway.

Anxiously I fling aside the casement,
Scan the waters running to the Northward
As the tide turns. But no sail appeareth.
Still a short reprieve, alone together,
For the first and last time in my chamber;—
In thy chamber; all that's mine is thine, Love;—
And I bend o'er thine unclouded beauty.
Love, thou art too fair; the pallid marble,
'Mid the tools there by the Northern window,
Hardly boasts a paler hue than thou dost,
Lying still upon the oaken coffer.
In yon marble I had thought to fix thee,
Standing poised with outspread arms above me,
As a spirit from a world ethereal,
Leading me still onward to the highest.
But thou never more thus wise shalt lead me;
Only I shall hear thee ever calling
From afar beyond my vision, upward,
Where the stars, to us so distant, glimmer
Far below thee, as thou gazest downward.
So I slowly swing the marble over:
Thou shalt rest beside me in our chamber

On and on for ever, as thou restest
Now, on this first piteous home-coming.

Once again I search the far horizon,
Whence the boats will grow from out the East-
ward;
Then the splinters fly before my chisel,
Till the echoes sound adown the tower
And the sea-birds circle round it screaming,
As they float above the turning waters.
Swift the long hours pass and slow there cometh,—
While the splinters falling, falling, falling,
Grow yet smaller, ever smaller, smaller,
And my fevered hand its goal attaineth,—
Such a form from out the icy marble,
As no other ever yet hath fashioned:
And across the ocean surges, Eastward,
Still no sign of boat or sail appeareth.

Lo, the sun has reached his daily limit,
And no more athwart the shadowed corner
Will the cross-lights strive in play together!
Others may relinquish their endeavour,
When the late far Northern evening endeth;
You and I, Love, still must keep a night-watch,
And, the while yon silver light is swinging

From the darkened beam across the ceiling,
Making all the shadows softly tremble,—
Work on yet through all that lies before us.

Twice the hands have made the dial's circuit
Since thy blossom decked the reaper's bosom,
As he stooped and singled out its sweetness
From the scythe-sweep's full appointed number.
Yet my task but hardly nears its ending;
Though I see thee grow again before me,
All in white,—the emblem of the purest.
There thy hand lies listless where the oak ends,
And the arm is stretched that bears thy tresses,
While its fellow slips and falleth backward;
And thy form, so lithe in girlhood's beauty,
Gleameth light along the dusky coffer
In a silver sheen of radiant graces.
Ah, so cunningly the philtre worketh,
It would surely seem those eyes must open!
Yet it may not be: I bend above thee;—
Sleep thy sleep, Love, sleep and never waken;
Let me aye keep watch and ward beside thee,
Praying that the lights may never kindle
Through the casement there—from out the East-
ward,
Where the boats grow up amid the darkness.

So the slow night waneth, and the morning
Rises drear and chill:—the long lean fingers
Of yon haggard shape, that spectral bodeth,
Drearly creep and clutch each crag and skerry,—
One white swirl of death and misty vapour.
On and on the chisel ringeth ever,
Following each line that sinuous windeth
In a maze of beauty o'er thy figure;—
See the slender crested folds, close clinging
To the form beneath them, rising, falling,
Now to catch a light and now to vanish,
Fade and die away; but all revealing
Some suggestion of the hidden beauty,
While each hollow darkly lies mysterious.

Can my skill approach that soft white marvel
Where the neck fades slow into the shoulder,
Or thy bosom, e'en too subtly moulded,
Where thy shroud, a little space receding,
Shows thy maiden years so full of promise?
Pheidias long ago wrought his perfection.
True, to-day we can but guess that beauty
From a broken torso by a pupil:
But those limbs and hands and feet we dream of
Fall far short of these I see before me.
Skopas even caged the yearning spirit

In the marble visage of a statue,
So that none might pass but he should wonder.
I would fain enmesh a deeper passion,
Lingering in the features that once loved me.
Can the marble ever match the grandeur
Of that queenly head so lowly lying,—
Royal, as becomes a chieftain's daughter,
Yet with all the tenderness of childhood?
Some reflection of that wistful longing
Plays about thine eyes the while thou sleepest.
Here within the stone it reappeareth
Where the shadows, fuller 'neath the eyebrow,
Melt into the half-tones, then grow brighter
As the form still gently curving upward,
In a delicate relay of changes,
Seeks the light that, dazzling for a moment
In the marble's crystal iridescence,
Wanes and dies away into the darkness:
And thy lips just part as if to utter
Some love-promise of the heavenly love-bliss—
Higher, nobler than our love and wider—
Yet, though tuned to sing the heavenly music,
Made by God, I think, for earthly kisses.

Never yet was line so full of meaning
As the line that parts those lips asunder,

Bending like the curving bow of Eros,
Yet with thousand subtle modulations.
So my spirit dies away in sighing
As the day dies down into the blackness,
And the chill of night benumbs my senses
Till I tremble while my doubts assail me ;—
What if, lost in wonder at thy beauty,
I should hear the still, small voice soft speaking,
And High God should look and smile in pity :—
‘Needest thou retain this fleshly image
When the ruling spirit hath departed ?’
And my soul would answer : ‘For my weakness
Grant me this. The spirit never quitteth,
But the traces of its sojourn linger ;
And some things of earth may point us forward ;
Through a brother’s love we learn the highest,
Passing from the seen to find the unseen.
Yea, although we reach at length the summit,
Yet to see the way we came is pleasant ;
While each stage, slow passed, when viewed in
order,
Helps to measure feebly what we cannot—
Hints the infinite from out the finite.’

Have I slept, Love ? Lo, the sun ariseth
Once again beyond the distant mountains ;

But the clouds are massing North and Eastward
And the leaden sea is rising grimly,
Ere the wind itself appears that follows.
Hence I know, unless I see them coming
Even now, that we are granted respite:
None can come with wind and sea against them,
None have ever crossed these treacherous waters
With a gale from out the Westward blowing.
And across the gloomy tideway, Eastward,
Not a sign of boat or sail appeareth.

Thus the wild day endeth, and the night-time,
Wilder yet, doth hurl the gale upon us,
Lifts the sea and whirls the flying spindrift,
Till the tower vibrates to its foundations
And the sleet is frozen in each crevice.
Once again night turns to dawn and noon-
tide;
Yet, though evening and darkness follow,
Still the tempest screams and naught abateth.

So the night hours pass and, ere the dayspring
Fades again into the grey of even,
Toiling yet, and clean forspent with toiling,
I behold my task of love accomplished
And my nerveless hand lets fall the chisel.

Scarce my burning eyes now see the waters
As once more I reach the Eastern window,
And, upon the waste of waters Eastward,
Still no sign of boat or sail appeareth.

Thus the end as all things reach their ending :
Shall we go, Love, you and I together,
Ere thy beauty fades away for ever,
As the magic of the philtre dieth
And the spell that holds thee shall be broken ?
Shall we go, we two, this once together,
Once, but once again, your white arms clinging
Round my neck, as we descend the stair-
way,
Winding down, where glint the chequered light-
rays
Through the narrow oilettes on thy features
Just to let me kiss them once in passing ?
Yea, the muffled bell is calling, calling,
Calling, and we pass from out the tower,
Through the courtyard to the little chapel,
Waiting to receive its sacred treasure,
Where each sad necessity lies ready ;
And the pages stand in mutest wonder,
Nearly lost amid the gathering shadow,
Ashen-hued against their black silk doublets.

So beneath the catafalque we lay thee
Thus in state to wait the last night vigil,
There amid the four tall waxen candles,
Flickering as the gusts play round about them,
While faint colours from the dim-lit windows
Star the gloom the lamps can not illumine.
Fragrantly the incense mounteth upward
And the mournful music moveth onward,
Like the calm and measured tread of sorrow.
Yet, anon, there breaks the clang of passion
In the muffled cry of grief insistent
From the belfry, tolling, ever tolling.
By the bier we stand:—the weary ending
Weighs upon us and the West wind whispers,
Whispers, wailing, as once more it rises,
Murmuring and growing loud and louder.
And our faces, wan and white and wistful,
Peer into the hollow of the darkness;
While about our hearts the wind is roaring.
And the past comes back from out the distance,
Heaping one great agony of anguish,—
All the joyaunce of the days departed,
All the glory of what should have blossomed,
All the radiance of a rare perfection
In a beauty and a grace unequalled,
All, in this one moment, lost for ever.

Then they turn and one by one pass outward,
Men-at-arms and slim, awestricken pages;
We are left alone within the shadows,—
So alone that even God is silent.
Yet God made the love that sealed the ending.
So, before I lay thee with my kinsmen—
Edna, daughter of a hundred chieftains—
Here amid the dimly flickering candles,
While I tremble, utterly heart-broken,
Take my kiss of hungry, hopeless longing—
Claiming you as mine throughout the ages.
Thus we enter on our last night vigil;
And the stillness slowly grows profounder
As the wind again abates its moaning;
Till at dawn naught save a gentle lapping
Breaks the vast immensity of silence,
When the watchman on the outer turret
Suddenly uplifts a voice of warning,
And the cry resounds throughout the courtyard:
That the boats and sails, so long awaited,
Grow up clearly now from out the Eastward.
So at length has come the fateful summons.
Swiftly will their warriors be upon us,
Far outnumbering our slender forces,
Yet outworn with travel, toil, and rowing,
While my men are fresh and fierce and ready.

Fare thee well, Love, for the conflict calleth—
They, who slew thee, fain would slay me also ;
And thy wrongs would vainly cry for vengeance.
Fare thee well, and in thy name I conquer ;
In thy name I die, if that the issue
Of the dark unknown that winds about me.

Oh, my dearest, bitter is the parting ;
As I gaze again upon that beauty,
Where the loveliest of all souls had dwelling
And the mortal framework was transfigured,
Glowing with a more than heavenly glory.
Yet thou lovedst me :—how strange the marvel.
By thy love I too am recreated,
While I bend the last time o'er thy features,
In this sacred mystical communion,
Past the grave and death and mortal limits.
As I place my hands beneath thy tresses,
Lip on lip in agony close pressing,
Passionate and yet restrained and awful,
Ere I face the dim, uncertain battle,
Seal the finish of our sad love's striving :—
Kiss forgiveness, Sweet, good-bye for ever.

WAR

SHE came to me with garlands in her hand,
Singing a song of victory and fame,
Far-woven with long years' immortal fame,
A queen of queens in Might's heroic land.

Alluring eyes 'neath brows austere grand;—
How could be stayed vain love's aspiring flame?
Yet toward me still with pauseless feet she came:
'My love is his who serves at my command.'

I lay with her, and at her touch I shrank;
Unstrung by pain, blood oozing from my side,
And all my limbs were bruised upon the stones.

Our children were Despair and Want and Pride;—
While 'neath the sedges, rustling o'er the bank,
The rain drips through my unremembered bones.

EDINBURGH

LUSITANIAE NAUFRAGIUM

HERE in the dread fulfilment of our fears,
Upon thy trembling lips I kiss thee, Sweet,
While in thy frightened eyes are gathering tears,
As unrelenting death and horror meet.

Go seek my gentle queen and give to her
This kiss, and these to my three children fair,
And one for thee, my princess-messenger,
Whose childhood's beauty softens death's
despair.

The boat is here, yet, ere thy feet I guide,
I hold thee fast in one last agony,
Then speed thee o'er the darkening waters' tide ;
Go bear my kisses, Child, across the sea.

And in the day the sea gives up her dead,
When hearts most loved shall meet me on the
shore,
With those most intimately sacred tread
The welcoming marge where we unite, once
more.

O thou, too young to know of love or death,
Grant me this tryst when Time's spent years
depart,
Thou on whose lips her own kiss lingereth
And all my children's love about thy heart.

Through all the griding wrack of crash and pain
Heaven guide thee safely o'er the ocean-swell;
Ah God! I dare not look at thee again;
The water rises—I must go—farewell!

QUEENSTOWN. MAY 1915

IRREMEABILE TEMPUS

NO rest, no pause, no stay,
The endless moments glide;
An every world should cease to be
Time were not satisfied.

To each glad hour we cling
That rude winds sweep away,
Till echoing in the past we hear
The wail of their dismay.

Too long, too short, too strange,
The bright child-days are fled;
While glittering sands that once ran gold,
Alas, run dust instead.

For childhood, laughter-strown,
I call and call in vain;
My little playmate's winsome face
Time will not bring again.

No hour may I prolong,
Nor turn the dread hands back,
Yet can no joy in future years
Bring what the past years lack.

Past, Present, and To-come
Shape the eternal soul ;
The stillborn hope of yesterday
Is lost unto the whole.

Give now the vanished gift,
From these frail fingers reft ;
Yet, though it fill the present full,
The empty past is left.

To-day spreads all her wares
Untouched, despised, too late,—
A kiss from those child-lips I miss,
And naught can compensate.

LONDON

LOCH BOISDALE

(Where Prince Charlie bade farewell to the MacLeods)

FAR far aloft, dark in the dusky sky,
The topsail stands and all the shrouds grow
dim.

Into night's interlude the day must die,
And down the past our thoughts return to him.

Save for the swirl of water at her bow
And the dull surge on the receding shore—
No sound:—while one blue shadow even now
Hides Calvay's ruined Isle and stern Ben More.

So must it then have been, when hope was spent,
And all love's daring loyalty had failed;
And eyes were wet in sad bewilderment
That in the days of death had never quailed.

With what full heart his backward glances turned,
When the slow hesitant farewells were said,
With what full hearts they twain despairing
yearned
After the sail that through the darkness sped.

A hope, a dim ideal, a useless quest,
A sacrifice to what might never be :
This is to touch life's essence at its best,
Dying for dreams more real than sight can see.

Hail to the lad who can no more return,
And fling away the self and all its gains ;
Each sober calculating caution spurn,
For once let generous passion seize the reins !

Ah Donald ! could we grasp thee by the hand,
Or, Murdoch, see thee in thy boyhood's grace,
Proud, by thy prince, doom-girt to take thy stand,
Love gleaming through the beauty of thy face ;

Then might we yet on some romantic morn
Bring back the old world's chivalry again,
And fight a lost Culloden more forlorn,
Yet clean by death our narrowed lives from
stain.

EDINBURGH

PARTING

WITH silent lips, and full hearts, passion-
stirred,

We watch the sands run low,
And hesitate to speak the final word,—
Yet one of us must go.

And round us closes in the mist and rain,—
The long, unending chill of years of pain,—
We turn away and never meet again ;
Must fate foredoom it so ?

We turn away and never meet again :
Say, why must these things be ?

Our sole reply, inexorably plain,
That things are as we see.

Our world is but a world of long good-byes,
O'er every meeting still the shadow lies
Of far-off watching with dull, straining eyes
Down endless hopes and vain.

And though, within the dark unrolling ways,
Some ghost may yet remain
Of what was you or I in earlier days,
We cannot meet again :

It is not we,—we in our youth have fled,
Fled never to return; our youth is dead.
What hollow mockery is this instead
That cruel fates ordain?

Oh, LOVE, * thyself, dost thou no healing know?
Must thou still fight and fail?
Come pain, come death, come torture, every woe;—
Take all that may avail:
Our life, our soul, all other joys, and heap
Eternities of sorrows ages deep,
But give us each to each—thus much to keep,
And all the rest may go.

But no—farewell—one fevered kiss and strained,
Filled full with wild despair,
Until the blood starts back where white lips
pained,
Close pressed as grief can bear,
One faint good-bye—then blank for evermore;
The world is cold, and nothing lies before;
And oh, the stillness, creeping o'er and o'er
The sad mist-laden air!

CADILLAC, MICHIGAN

Eros.

TO-MORROW

MAIDENS mine, now haste ye, haste ye hither
And release my flowing hair for me ;
Let it fall about me as a mantle
Down from head to knee.
Help me lay aside my clinging raiment,—
I asleep would be.

For, the sooner slumber seals my eyelids,
Swiftlier shall the long night turn to day,
And the darkness melting into morning
Lift all fear away.
Shall to-morrow's morn not be the gayest,
Gayest of the gay ?

In the glass but dimly are reflected,
As the candles flicker faint and low,
Lips that he has kissed, and kissed how often
I alone can know ;
While his jewels, sparkling 'mid the shadows,
Shining come and go.

Maidens mine, now haste ye, haste ye hither ;
Speed the lagging dawn as best ye may,
When we two, the bridal banquet ended,
Seas unknown essay—
Leaving all the weary past behind us
As we sail away.

Maidens mine, my eyes grow dull and heavy,—
'Tis the last time I alone must rest ;
I shall kiss his brow, when sad or weary,
Pillowed on my breast,
While we hear the sea-bird ever calling
Round her rock-built nest.

Now good-night, and leave me softly sleeping,
Dreams of maiden memories gliding by ;
Or 'mid wonderlands of future promise,
Where Love's gardens lie,
May I gather joy's enchanted blossoms,
Blooms that never die.

.
Morning breaks, but at the kirk she waiteth,
Wind and rain are roaring in the West ;
Night at length comes on, a lonely chamber
Offers her no rest :
Ocean waves are kissing his fair forehead,
Pillowed on their breast.

CHILDHOOD

COME back to me, wee maiden of my dreams,
With all life's future drifting past thy feet.
What of no worth and what of value seems,
That thou would'st hold or fling away, my
Sweet?

Come back to me, wee maiden of my heart :
'Tis just because thou art not that nor this,
But limitless in all the ways that part,
That thou art more to me than all that is.

Come back to me, wee maiden of unrest ;
For Youth and Longing look for what is not ;
Youth, undismayed, essays an endless quest
And Longing wings the ways that life forgot.

Come back to me, wee maiden of dark death :
Desire will slay, or die when satisfied ;
And infinite enchantment vanisheth
When thou art grown. 'Tis then that thou
hast died.

Come back to me, wee maiden of my hour ;
Then let desire swift slay me when he will,
I would not stay him, though I had the power ;
For in death's dreams thou wilt be living still.

S.S. 'ARABIC'

MID-ATLANTIC

THE ISLE OF FOULA [THULĒ]

WHO is it loves the sea,
And the salt sea-spray on his face?
Come, let him sail with me
And flee from the land for a space.
Let us leave the long stretches of road,
Hemmed in by the hedges and walls,
And turn where the limitless tides have flowed
And the voice of the sea-bird calls.

Let us make for the queen of the deep,
The lonely isle of the North,
Precipitous, towering, and steep,
That over the waste looks forth.
Wherever the eye may gaze,
Be it North, South, East, or West,
There is naught to behold but the wide sea-ways
And the ships on the ocean's breast.

It is there that we live in the seas,—
No stretches of country behind,
Not a breath of a land-blown breeze,
Each wind is a sea-blown wind.

Far in the uttermost tide

Agricola saw her stand,

With the clouds on her faint far peaks that hide

Thulē, the ultimate land.

ISLE OF FOULA

Φιλεῖν τῶν φιλτάτων τὰ φίλτατα

ARISTOTLE : Müller, 'Frag. Hist.,' ii. p. 150.

The Malians, who had endured many things from war and other causes, sent to the oracle at Delphi for advice. The reply, whose jingle and the double meaning of φιλεῖν, which means both to love and to kiss, can hardly be rendered into English, instead of being an exhortation to battle, was that they should love and kiss the most lovable and kissable of the most lovable and kissable. This they thought must refer to the children; so they instituted a custom of handing them round, naked, at the feasts to be kissed. After this all went well with them.

THE feast draws near its ending,
The fiery wine's aflow,
And golden lamps are lending
A strange refulgent glow ;
While, past the shadowy porches,
The shimmering lights begin,
Long lines of lambent torches
That lead the children in.

Meek maidens and proud mothers
Their matchless burdens bear ;
Bold fathers and brave brothers
Receive with reverent care
And lift aloft with laughter
Each radiant girl and boy,
Till every echoing rafter
Rings with resounding joy.

Wise words at Delphi spoken
 Illume the years untold :
 Love's fingers clasp unbroken
 What no mere might may hold.
 Might's gleaming gauntlet misses
 Love's glow in hands ungloved.
 'LOVE YE WITH LOVE'S OWN KISSES
 THE LOVELIEST OF THE LOVED.'

So pledge in love undying
 Their fame for future years,
 While, on your strength relying,
 They fling away all fears ;
 Yet to their childhood golden
 Ye cling, who once have wist
 That long grey years and olden
 Steal all your love has kissed.

Truer than trust hereafter
 Their wondering, youthful eyes,
 The lilt of children's laughter
 All wisdom's wealth outvies ;
 Yet boyhood's loveliest graces
 Or maiden's magic mien
 Leave but the lingering traces
 Of memories unseen.

Ye weave your lives around them
 And work their weal alone,
 And wistful watch without them
 When, fledged, your brood has flown ;
 For, as ye pass Death's portal,
 The Gods will only give
 To be so far immortal
 That in these lives ye live.

What do ye know of sorrow
 Who have not drained her cup?
 How will ye face the morrow
 With these last dregs to sup?
 Mayhap through empty spaces,
 With poignant pulse of pain,
 Ye 'll seek those winsome faces
 And wear and wait in vain.

And in their last long sleeping,
 So still and frail and white,
 Ye 'll strive amid love's weeping
 To print upon your sight,
 Ere the dark earth is falling
 And the last rites are said,
 Clear lines for sad recalling
 Dear visions of your dead.

INDIVIDUALITY

THE soaring towers have come to grief,
The wind sweeps through the roofless hall,
The toad-flax with its ivied leaf
Creeps over all.

And we, whose pulsing blood was hot
In youth's extravagance of strain,
Grown slow through changing years are not
The same again.

The far-famed monument we see
Inevitably must decay
Till time annihilate. So we
Shall pass away.

They say,—‘our place shall yet be filled;
The race of mortals goes not by;
The child's glad laughter is not stilled
Though children die.

'Sweet children in the years to be
Shall wring love's heart as once of old,
And childhood's beauty endlessly
Its blooms unfold.'

Nay mock us not with idle tales ;
'Tis individual life we crave :
No vague inclusive whole avails
Our faith to save.

What is a race that knows not men,
A scheme that is no scheme of things,
A city without citizen?—
Void fancyings.

Ah Love ! I kissed thee yesterday,
To-night I lean thy lips above ;—
Take kisses, glances, words away,—
And where is love ?

All tuneless were heaven's voids remote,
And indistinguishably vain,
If each soul's own peculiar note
Lived not again.

EDINBURGH .

THE MAUSSOLLEION-CHARIOTEER

‘ὦ τέχνη πνεύματος ὠκυτέρα.’

HE leans alert o'er the chariot-rail and looks
toward the goal:

In the shadowy vault beneath the brow light
breaks from the burning soul.

O how shall we learn, O how shall we know, the
name of the mage so great,

Who, spurning the bounds of human skill, did a
god's task consummate?

Is it thee, O Skopas, we must praise for the rush
and the sweeping line,

For the parted lips and the breathing hope from
the yearning heart divine,

For the perfect form, whose perfection points to
a more than perfect yet,

Where the midmost splendour of heaven would
seem but as darkness to forget?

We may never know the hand that drew that face
with its living fire;

We may never tell the power that filled those
eyes with their swift desire,

And the strenuous strife of the agony that could
not be expressed,—
The thing that men call art that strives to over-
pass the best.

Yet world after world has the sculptor seen, and
world after world flung by,
To chisel anew a remoter dream than the dull
days signify,
From the aspirations of age-long years that the
perfect type despise,
Till here in the utmost art we find the romance
of the heart's emprise.

And even the swirl of the chiton's hem hints
more than a god may see:
Ah leave, ah leave mere truth behind and seek for
what cannot be.
O what of the goal, and what of the way, and
what of the flying steed,—
For 'tis on and on through the infinite, while the
stars and the light cry 'speed.'

THE DAWN

THE light breaks through the latticed pane
And once more wakes me to renew
The hateful past, whose woeful strain
Presses upon my throbbing brain
And nothing can undo.

And the long future rises blank,
An irremediable waste,
Where black sand stretches bank on bank ;
Black basalt hills close either flank,
With mocking snow enlaced.

And hopeless, toward an unseen God,
With burning feet, I creep dismayed,
And fear to view the way untrod,
While, awed by his chastising rod,
I dare not seek for aid.

Yet no! the gloomy past is dead,
And as I wake its phantoms flee ;
Red-gold the Eastern light is shed,
And, rich with promise, gilds thy head
And strikes athwart to me.

Sweet little wife, whose truant hair
Darkly across the pillow steals
And shadows half thy cheek so fair,
Yet, where the snow-white throat lies bare,
Its loveliness reveals,

Sleep softly, only let me gaze,
Awed as I watch thee breathing low :
Gently the shifting shadow plays,
As life works out the appointed ways
Rising and falling slow.

Whence came that life and, stranger still,
The trembling love that whispers : ' Mine '
And blends two souls one fate to fill,
And, bound within a Higher Will,
Foreshadows the Divine ?

I saw thee first, when years, now spent,
Proffered scant draughts of earthly bliss ;
Yet, ere the fateful moment went,
In burning flame our spirits blent
In one supernal kiss.

'Twas thus I knew thee, child, although
Till then our eyes had never met ;

For, in those blue deeps far below,
Throned 'mid thy pure thoughts' tranquil flow,
I saw the Eternal set.

And, from my clouded sight, the mist
Vanished for ever in love's blaze.
Through thee, the wonder-gift, I wist
The Giver I so long had missed
In reason's devious maze.

And in the joy of that love-smile,
That shone from the far face of God,
The love-lit clouds of earth grew red,
And, as the long-drawn winter sped,
They flushed the vernal sod.

And all the endless road grew bright,
Grew bright with flowers on either hand,
Bewilderingly infinite,
Whereon we fleet with footsteps light
Through an enchanted land.

THE SEA-QUEEN

THE day dies down into deepening gloom, and
the wind for once is still,
And the shadows rise in a dim dark pool to the
height of the window sill;
The old house creaks as the silence spreads
unruffled and vast and drear,
Till the slightest sound is an echoing knell as it
falls on the startled ear.

The sand lies glimmering, strange and grey, at the
foot of the craggy steep,
While the ominous, inky, sullen sea has lulled its
waves to sleep,
And the snags stand gaunt on the desolate shore
'mid the sea-weed dry and stiff,
Where bleaching bones of shipwrecked men show
faint at the foot of the cliff.

Alone in the creaking house I sit, and I know that
the end must be
Some day, by a way that I cannot escape, in this
house by the wintry sea;

Where memory broods o'er the days of old as the
 shapes creep forth and stare,
And the wan white face of my Love looks out
 from the shadowy mist of her hair.

The wan white face of my Love in pain, who
 stretches her arms to speak,
And I strive to hear, and listen in vain, as the
 oaken timbers creak,
Or I catch her footfall soft and light, and turn,
 but she is not there—
My Love, who sleeps on the couch of Death in the
 land of my hope's despair.

Oh, why is my heart so sick with dread, and what
 has my soul to fear,
When the ultimate realm of Death itself keeps all
 that I hold most dear?
My beautiful Love, with her beautiful hands and
 her lips with their fragrant breath,
Shall press my face to her own once more, yes,
 there in the land of Death.

Yet still through the creak of the dismal house I
 hear a pitiful sigh,
And a warning tells me my hope is vain, yet how
 can I else than die?

A raven sweeps by the window pane from his
haunt on the storm-rent hill,
And a log from the fire slips down with a crash ;
then even the house is still.

And ever the months and the years have gone and
ever that low sad sigh
In the weary house by the perilous shore, where
my only hope is to die ;
And menacing half-seen forms appear remorseless,
cruel, and grim,
Whose long lean arms, reaching out as I pass, still
lurk in the shadows dim.

And they draw me near to the window pane,
where I cannot avoid the sight,
As the moon with her deathly sapphire sheen
sheds ever her loveless light ;
And I shut my eyes, but my ears must hear what-
ever the curse may bring,
And, if my resisting eyes uncloze, I shall see the
fearful thing.

For the doom has come, it is all around, oppressive
and near and still,
And I struggle to free myself, close pressed by
those arms 'gainst the window sill.

Then sudden I hear the harrowing cry of my Love
in her fear for me,
And my limbs grow numb and the cold sweat falls
as the terror comes over the sea;

While a sound, enticing, alluring, wild, wells up
from the hideous night,
Of a music that thrills through my quivering
nerves with the pain of a fierce delight,
And, could I but keep my eyelids closed, who
knows but the hour might turn?
Yet my courage fails as the spirit quails, and I
open them wide and learn.

And here, below, at the water's marge, there sits
in the dreary light
A maiden, shaped for a god to limn, with ivory
form and white;
Her locks more dense than the inky deep and her
splendid limbs all bare,
While the gleaming glint of her shoulder shows
through the wealth of her wonderful hair.

And oh, her magical twin white breasts and her
delicate, slender throat,
And the mystical curve of the rare red lips whence
the ravishing melodies float;

So finely modelled and cleanly cut is the scheme
of her body's grace—

Oh, how can my spirit dare to endure the enchant-
ing lure of her face?

Yet your eyes are cruel and grey, Sea-Queen, and
your lips are too luscious and sweet,

As a poisoned flower in the glade that shows its
beauty of dark deceit;

And the rippling strength of your agile form is
hard, unyielding, and chill:

You never could nestle by me, Sea-Queen, softly
and warm and still.

But I feel the spell of your passionate song and
am thrall'd by your witching gaze,

And the murky mass of your marvellous hair has
twined my heart in its maze,

And your lovely limbs with the pleading arms
and your exquisite hands and feet

Are drawing the uttermost deeps of my soul:—
You are cruel, in sooth,—but sweet.

And sweet is the thought of your strange em-
brace; yet what are the bones on the shore,
Whose immortal souls you have made your own
and whose bodies are seen no more?

Oh, why must you take my soul, Sea-Queen; and
your kisses, oh, why must they be
Dear bought, at so vast a price of doom, on the
strand of this wintry sea?

But now you have made me your own, Sea-Queen,
and bewildered and thrall'd I go
Where ruby-tipped are the breasts of pearl on
that bosom of coldest snow.
Yet oh! as I pass from the haunted house and
the threshold of fate is crossed,
I hear the agonised cry of Love that fought for
my soul and lost.

And you draw me down with your direful spell in
the whirling, narrowing years,
Whose clamorous eddies cannot drown that wild
lament in my ears;
And, or ever I touch those frozen lips, I learn at
the last, too late,
When clasped in the ice of a dead desire, how
this is not love—but hate.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., U.S.A.

IRRESOLUTION

HE would come back, if I should call,
Before he reached the turning in the lane,
And once again his burning words would fall,
And I would read the love revealed more plain
Than it were written fair in white and black :
He would come back.

And now he passes out of sight ;
Yet I might run and stay him as he goes,
And the deep eyes, lit with far-searching light,
Would flame the love he deems not that he
shows,
And at my side up the familiar track
He would come back.

And now the moment has gone by :
Is it too late—might I not write—and then
He, ere the ship had spread her wings to fly,
My letter to his lips, would turn again
And, swift as vessel on a favouring tack,
He would come back ?

What though he go, is he so fair,
Or tall or swift of foot beyond his peers?
Eyes he may have and tremulous lips and rare
And power and learning of the endless years;
But others have their charm who these things lack,
Though he come back.

And now the long seas intervene ;
Yea, though I write, ere this he may forget,
And yet he may have thoughts of what has been,
And all my wayward wilfulness regret,
And e'en forgive the wounds I gave, alack :
He might come back.

Yes, he might come, I see it plain :
His hands about my face, while through my eyes
He gazes to my soul and calms its pain ;
Then, lip to lip, my pride and folly dies.
But oh, the shame and the remorseful rack,
Though he come back !

Nay, he will never come, I know.
What I have done is done, my sun has set,
While my best self, through the blank years and
slow,
Will conquer the low self that might forget,
Although no more along the shadowy track
Can he come back.

EDINBURGH

THE HOUR OF MEETING

IS it too much I ask—

More than is meet or lies within your power?
I know how busy is your life of care,
Ye have so many duties elsewhere,
I would not ask for more than ye can spare.

Could ye not bide and watch with Me one hour?
Is it too much I ask?

Could ye not watch one hour—

One little hour from out the store of days
That pauseless glide, a golden gift from Me?
Is aught not Mine of all the things that be?
What hold ye of your own of all ye see

That ye should fail in this scant meed of praise?
Could ye not watch one hour?

Could ye but watch one hour,

If not to render back—why, then, for gain,
To be removed from strain of stirring strife,
From anxious care of your too fevered life,
Fraught with despondence and with troubles rife,

'T would be as dreams of peace from weary pain—
Could ye but watch one hour.

An ye would watch one hour,
 Though but to turn your mind to serious things,
To high philosophies and sober thought,
And leave the market of the sold and bought,
And all material good that men have sought,
 Wide wonder-worlds would greet your soaring
 wings
An ye could watch one hour.

But, if with ME ye watched,
 And in the stillness listened silently,
Then would My spirit speak in silvern tone,
And in direct communion with Mine own
Each would be one with Me, we two alone,
 The while there ceased all things men touch or
 see,
If but with Me ye watched.

Could ye not watch with Me?
 Am I too far, who yet hold you so dear?
Have ye not watched, in other time and place,
With sons and daughters of your own loved
 race,
While the hearts burned till darkness fell apace?
 Love an ye will; I am Love's SELF and near.
Could ye not watch with Me?

One hour ye watch, and then

Another summons calls you to depart,
Some high pursuit, some intellectual aim,
Some noble deed, some petty social claim—
The sixty minutes measured out the same.

Must ye resent My pleadings at your heart?
One hour ye watch ; and then——?

.

The watch is over now.

As o'er Jerusalem I wept of yore
So must I weep again in this sad day,
And feel the nails that tear, the wounds that slay ;
So late ye came, so punctually away.

The hour is gone—nay, linger here no more ;
The watch is over now.

EDINBURGH

THE LITTLE PRINCESS

SHE lies within the chapel fair,
The little princess white and still,
Her dark resplendent waves of hair
The aisles with subtle fragrance fill.

Two candles stand behind her head
And two her straightened feet before;
Calmly their mellow lights are shed
And o'er her pallid beauty pour.

When, through the lonely stillness there,
A page steals in with noiseless tread,
So slight and slim and debonair,
With ivory skin and shapely head.

Within his hands are roses three,
And one he places on her brow,
And kisses her most wistfully,
Who heedeth not his passion now.

And one he lays upon her breast,
And fervent kisses her again;
The third between her feet doth rest,
Sealed with a kiss of beating pain.

‘One kiss for when I saw you first,
The little maid of seven years;
One for the frenzied hope I nursed
When, ten years old, I dried your tears.

‘And one, when fourteen years are gone,
With hot lips on your icy feet.
Will the world really still go on
When you are dead—are dead, my sweet?’

EDINBURGH

FROM THE FOUR AIRTS

I. FROM THE NORTH.

EDINBURGH : LINES FROM FAR NORTH

II. FROM THE SOUTH.

THE NORTH WIND.

III. FROM THE EAST.

THE FIRTH OF FORTH.

IV. FROM THE WEST.

AULD REEKIE.

I

EDINBURGH

LINES FROM FAR NORTH

TURN Southward o'er the hills; take hands
with me,

Past where the labourer on the Fifeshire fields
Gazes across the narrow band of sea
And views the smoke, slow drifting to the lee,
That the great city yields.

For no brief moment in a thousand years

Yon smoke has failed to drift along the sky.
Auld Reekie still her murky cloud-crest rears;
And the grey rock now looms, now disappears,
As in the days gone by.

What though the North-East wind cuts clear and
keen

Down every street and turning as a knife!
Dearer to me than Southern slopes and green,
Lulled by the languid airs of lands serene,
Sleep-bound, devoid of life.

Oh, hearts that beat ; oh, hands alive and strong,
Live not upon the glories of the past,
Singing the same reiterated song,
Nor tarry with the dreamers overlong
Till all be overcast !

Let the keen airs bestir you as of old,
And, ere the beauty and the grace have fled,
And Mammon with foul fingers overbold
Steal from the palsied grasp the gifts ye hold,
Rise up and strike him dead.

The mighty cliff that broods above the town
And deems but one akropolis its peer,
No wind-swept loch now greets when looking
down,
Nor gentle dames and lords of high renown
Dwell in its barracks drear.

And all adown the famed historic mile,
Begrimed, besmirched, the houses leer and
gape,
Though every stone boasts how it fared erst-
while,
Which now rude filth and ruder hands defile
Where nothing can escape.

Gather the last few fragments that remain
 And of the vanished gold some gleam restore.
 An ye but loved your city, not in vain
 Would rise her desolate cry, and she would gain
 More beauty than before.

Old memories with old beauties intertwine;
 The western light flames full on Arthur's Seat,
 Though Blackford Hill, grown grey, has ceased to
 shine.
 My own school days return; steps pace with
 mine
 Down each familiar street.

Oft in the hours of boyhood did we twain
 Pass through the long green roads of Morning-
 side,
 That hath no equal in the King's domain;
 A city where fair gardens and walled lane
 Suggestive mysteries hide.

But he has gone, and beauty followeth,
 For naked flats rise gaunt on every hand;
 While the dross-gatherers chuckle under breath,
 Who sell God's beauty for the coins of Death
 And desecrate the land.

Yea, he is gone, as all things fair must die,
Ere our love's labour even had begun.
Two had done much, but what alone can I
'Mid the rude roar that drowns my bitter cry?—
And none will aid—not one.

O wondrous City, still so fair to see,
Must thou be last who might so well be first?
And ye—turn North again; take hands with me;
Nay, look not back on Sodom, should she be
Found wanting and accurst.

EDINBURGH

II

THE NORTH WIND

(With apologies to J. M.)

THE North Wind is calling, there is white upon
the hills ;

The cold snow is falling and every valley fills ;
And evermore my spirit hears, as Southward I
must roam,

The skirl about the ingle-neuk in the old Scots
home.

Eerie is the North Wind and weird with ancient
tales :

It tells of Highland forays amid the winter gales.
Grand are the grey hills, and oh, the dreary drouth
Of the level, lochless country in the sultry, sunny
South !

The North Wind, the strong wind, the wind for
mighty men ;

The wild wind, the fierce wind, that whistles down
the glen ;

The wind for sturdy laddies and for bonnie, winsome maids;

The wind of far-off childhood and of boyish escapades.

It's blue eyes and bright eyes and days of long ago

That keep my heart from breaking whenever North Winds blow;

And voices seem to whisper, as it wails around the lum,

And it's only down the North Wind that kisses ever come.

It soughs through the Pentlands, where my weary heart would be,

From Allermuir to Castlclaw and down by Loganlee,

And on past the clachan by the mouldering headstone tall,

Where a solitary poppy flames against the kirk-yard wall.

I feel its frenzied blowing, and the truant hours return

As it sweeps the marshy meadows and drowns the rushing burn.

Oh, the falling, falling water and the sighing in the
grass
And the lowing of the sleepy kye that linger in
the pass!

North Wind, North Wind, blow, blow to me,
For in thy fierce familiar strains can comfort only
be:
We two have raced together by hill and haugh
and burn,
And strange to me the other winds, whose tongues
I cannot learn.

The North Wind, the South Wind, the East Wind,
the West—
Yea, each has his own wind, the wind he loves
the best;
And the exile sadly longing, as his homing thoughts
take wing,
Sings again the plaintive measure that he heard
another sing.

LEDEBURY AND EDINEBURGH

III

THE FIRTH OF FORTH

WHO will come a-sailing on the dark blue
Forth,

Who will come a-sailing when the wind blows
North,

Beating out from harbour with a three-reefed sail,
Reaching to the Eastward in a good half gale?

Stiff is it blowing from the clear blue sky,
Sharp is every outline as the coast goes by,
Heading out from Granton for the Isle of May,
Not a thought of trouble all the livelong day.

Inchcolm behind us and Inchkeith before,
Aberdour Castle on the far-off shore,
Eerie with the memories of dim, past years,
Lords' and ladies' laughter—and long dried tears.

Heeling gunwale under till the first plank dips,
Slipping through the water like the great steam-
ships,

Past the little anchorage of Dysart town,
Quaint with corbie gables and old-world renown.

Grey upon the quarter rises Arthur's Seat,
Watching through the ages for returning feet :
Straining eyes grow weary, yet the first glimpse
seems
Full of home and welcoming and dear dead dreams.

South again we wear her and we let her go,
Running with the rollers though the winds may
blow,
Steering for Tantallon and the Bass Rock proud,
Racing with the gannets and the scudding cloud.

Up toward the wind again we sail due West,
Singing songs of longing that we love the best,
Singing of the City of Midlothian's Heart,
Where St. Giles is watching o'er the old Lawn
Mart.

Home again to moorings and luff into the wind,
Catch the buoy and furl the sail and leave our
boat behind,
Tread the ancient streets beneath the great grim
fort,
Looming dark and lonely o'er the lost West Port.

•

Who will come a-sailing on the dark blue Forth,
Who will come a-sailing when the wind blows
 North,
Beating out from harbour with a three-reefed sail,
Reaching to the Eastward in a good half gale?

EDINBURGH

IV

AULD REEKIE

IS she not fair beyond the poets' dreaming,
Ye who have seen and loved her answer me,
Set, as a silver crown with emeralds gleaming,
By the grey Northern sea?

We who have lost her, as afar we wander,
Know how our thoughts come creeping back
again
To linger fondly o'er the gifts ye squander,
Whom Fate has bid remain.

Toledo, girt by magic bridge and river;
Proud Heidelberg, that towers upon the height;
Venice, whose sunlit waters flash and quiver,—
Rare cities of delight;

Oxford, scarce touched by Time's reluctant fingers;
Vienna, ringed with glories of to-day;
Athens, whose violet crown in fancy lingers,
Peerless, yet passed away.

What can they show, these wonder-haunted places,
 Strewn golden-starred about the traveller's feet,
That pales not by her nature-dowered graces,
 Queen on her rock-built seat?

Here, on far Western slopes, we tell her story,
 Thrill as old tales their joy or sorrow yield,
Quaff reckless toasts to days of Stuart glory,
 And weep o'er Flodden Field.

And, faintly echoing back, your answers follow :
 ' We too have loved her, and we love her still.'
How may we know your protests ring not hollow,
 What deeds your love fulfil?

.

How peacefully the Western airs are sighing
 In the cool hush o'er San Francisco Bay.
Lo, where the city in the dusk is lying,
 A single light illumines the deepening grey!

The sea grows still, no more the white steeds,
 flying,
Speed o'er the water as the winds abate;
The darkened tideway, ere the day is dying,
 Bolts fast, with purple bars, the Golden Gate.

Beyond the bay the warm brown hills are
changing

And white carnelians blend with azurite,
While amethystine clouds are Eastward ranging,
In deeper tones, through topaz-fields of light.

Stern Tamalpaïs, in the distance glowing,
Keeps her long watch o'er lone Pacific seas;—
So calm, so rare, such tranquil zephyrs blowing
With fragrant breath;—yet we so ill at ease.

One vision of the old familiar places,
Where still our fathers' fathers' footprints
show;
One vision of the soul-remembered faces,—
And all the wide world's pageantry may go!

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA,
NEAR SAN FRANCISCO

Here endeth 'From the Four Airts.'

SURRENDER

'TIS cold within the shrine, the silver lamp
Burns very low ; and all without is black,
Save for the glowing sword that cleaves the night.
I haste to lay my treasures out of sight
Where, on the stones, the rain blows raw and
damp ;
Lest I should even now draw back.

So let them fall,—the rolling coins of gold ;
For all that wealth commands I cherish not.
Take too the battle-axe that gave me power,
The diadem of fame, I hoped some hour
To wear when cruel days had left me old,
Dear token I was not forgot.

I will give all, give all I cling to most,—
The very scroll that uttered wisdom's truth ;
Yea I will e'en renounce, fast-drowned in tears,
This little tress from her of mine own years,
Young, young as love ;—and, with love, self is
lost ;
So last—I strip the garb of youth

And naked, face the darkness and the rain,
And shudder as I touch the flaming sword:
But one thing bear I with me even yet;—
I cannot loose the girdle of regret:
Must then the sacrifice be all in vain?
Have pity, Lord! Have pity, Lord!

S.S. 'ARABIC

YOUTH'S TRAGEDY

NORTH turns the tide and meets the wind and
breaks,
No more the sullen rollers heaving slow,
But dark walls rise and front us as we go,
Gathering upon the bosom of their night
The foam-flakes' driving snow ;
And shudderingly the slight craft starts and
quakes,
Throbbing anew beneath each dreaded blow ;
And the storm-petrel wakes,
As through the mist we strain our weary sight,
And the waste chaos mocks our hapless plight.

Strain thy young sinews, Hakon, at the oar,
Strain, strain, and let us taste of hope once more,
Lest out of yon white-breathing death there loom
Grey against grey, beneath a cold grey sky,
The sheer, stark cliffs of doom,
Where the burn rises upward in the gloom
And, curséd, falls not in Youth's living tomb,
But flings its waters heavenward to die.

For 'neath the Wester Hævdi cliff he dwells,
The deathless boy, with sad, regretful gaze,
Watching the cycle of the endless days,
There where the long sea swells.
Oh, fair is he and young, and on his head
The ruddy gold outflames the glowing fire,
And from his haunted sapphire eyes is shed
The blue wan light of the lost soul's desire.
Pull hard, pull hard; nay, close thy round, round
eyes,

Those youthful eyes, that other eyes have seen,
Demure and grave beneath her fragrant hair,
And, gazing deeply, grown too wondrous wise,
Learning the secret of the world's despair,
As all her hope in her own eyes lay bare:
Would God it had not been!

'Tis not for me the dread, my years are told,
And if, indeed, are left or two or one,
It is enough: ere many moons had rolled
I might return and bid my bairns good-bye,
And climb to her who waits me past the sun
And the waste changings of yon reckless sky.
'Tis naught to me to loosen my life's hold
And totter home to die.

But thou, my child, with close dark locks of
youth

And dawning strength of manhood in each limb,
Hast only sipped the life-cup at the brim.
Much holds it yet: the molten heats of love
And the chilled dregs of nauseous doubt; 'twere
ruth

To lose it all to him,
And age-bent scale the frowning scars above.
Know'st thou the tale: how ever there he stands
Watching what fate may bring,
And from the deep thou hear'st him wildly sing
His passionate song; and, stretching out his hands,
He draws men on to yon hope-haunted lands,
Where the dim ghosts, of all that should have been
And never was, uplift their dolorous wail—
An undertone his thrilling notes between—
And the winds waft them seaward o'er the gale?
In high Dunedin once thou heard'st a boy
Sing in the chapel of the Holy Rood,
And, as the sweet voice ceased, for burning joy
Men wept. But mortal songster never yet
Drew tears as hot, the aching lids to wet,
As fill the measure of his interlude.
Or if he draws thee not with ravishment
Of his intenser music—ah, why then
Haply his wondrous form or azure eyes,
Piteous as though in pain, with fell intent,

Will drink the darkened waters of thy soul
Until the fount of pity's well-spring dries
And leaves thee, saddest of the sons of men,
On Time's death-sated roll.

Perchance thou see'st his white corse on the
wave

And, stirred that earth should lose a thing so fair,
Bravest the swirling tide such grace to save
From the chill vaults of the unfathomed grave,
What time he mocks thine innocent despair,
And clasps his slender arms about thy neck
As might thy brother, yet but twelve years old;
Till, when thou gain'st the strand, he draws thee
down

And, tossing back that hair the foam-flakes fleck,
The while the waters still its fulness drown,
Through thy warm lips, with greedy lips and cold,
He drains thy life in one delirious thrill;
While thy hot youth slips from thee as a dream,
And his swift veins thy tingling blood-drops fill:
His years renew their strength, and thou art old.

Once, in the time long past, across the waste
There wandered to our door an aged form,
Who entered in, his shrivelled limbs to warm,
And sat him down and stared into the fire;

Nor spake, nor heard, nor any food would taste.
My sister watched him, drawn by some desire,
And spake not either; for her Love was lost,
Who had essayed, that March, the Roost to cross
In such a boat as this.

When, on a sudden, met their eyes, and she
Fell at his feet, and knew that it was he,
And clung to him in one long soul-wrung kiss.

Nine moons he lingered with us and was gone,
Past the dark gates and the last whelming flood,
And still I hear his story echoing on,
And ever see his haggard face and wan,
The thin, drawn cheeks and lips devoid of blood;
And oh, my sister's features haunt me yet,
With stricken eyes that I would fain forget!

On a dark eve in March, those years away,
The mist closed in, as it is closing now,
And the slack tide turned north into the bay,
Meeting the sluggish prow—
[Pull hard! I see the shadow line of death,
Where the gaunt cliffs peer through their murky
breath!]

And swift and swifter yet his boat sped on,
As drawn in his despite by hands unseen;
Until he needs must clutch the iron shore,

And, in one fleeting breath, the boat had gone,
And naught to see but one grey waste of green.
But yet above the broken surges' roar,
Out of that grim, grey, misty void of fear,
A cry of long-drawn terror echoed clear;
And half within the billows' ebb and flow,
Held down by one gigantic block of stone,
A child he saw among the boulders thrown.
Full fair he was, and, as the dying glow
Of the spent fog-bound mazes of the West
Suffused the golden hair, it shone again,
And flushed the skin's bewilderment of snow.
The lips were wrought with unforgotten pain,
Yet beauteous still, and mutely moving slow
They spake in loveliness their dumb request.

He turned the stone, the listless burden raised,
And chafed the limbs and smoothed the dripping
 hair,
And stanch'd the ruby wound the rocks had
 made,
And wondered at the moulded form laid bare,
Beyond the grace on which Narkissos gazed,
In spell-bound madness of remotest time,
Where the dim pool of that far woodland glade
Mirrored the face sublime.

Then softly bent he down and pressed his lips
Upon the lashes of those languid eyes,
Which opened dreamily, with strange surprise,
Blue, bluer than the blue of halcyon.
They peered into the hollows of his soul,
Lit by the burning blue of their behest,
Flaming about his heart, and drew him on
With a wild yearning past his own control
That whelmed all longings of his mortal mind;
Lost in the dusky past and far behind.

His own lips found those witching lips, whose kiss
Sent a glad tremor as of sweetest pain
And fired his being with a nameless joy
That seemed to him as countless years of bliss.
A life-long dreaming trance he held the boy,
Thrall'd by his passionate pity's baneful chain;
Then the kiss chilled, and the dull present stared
Through the keen pleasures of that vanished past:
The boy was gone; the waves' moan held the shore;
Youth's wasted innocence returned no more,
Too bitter-sweet to last.

Bowed by decrepit age, he slowly fared
Up the sheer steep, beyond the waters' roar,
Haggard, with trembling steps, and lean and hoar.

So through the darkening hills he wandered slow,
Past the black, troubled burn, whose murmuring
flow

Rang the sad cadence of Youth's olden woe :
'Lost long ago, lost long and long ago.'

But Hakon, hist, in vain, alas, in vain
We strive! The cloud-wreaths part and close,
And, through the rifted veiling of the rain,
As the return of long awaited pain
That the poor heart but too minutely knows,
I saw him stand.—Winds from the North, awake!
Blow hard and harder yet! Lash the dark sea!
Strain on the sheet and lift us on our way!
What though the following horses seethe and
break;

Better broach to, out in the open deep,
And in the icy waters fall asleep,
Than live to touch his hands and fall his prey!
They rise not; toil no more; the die is cast,
The battle lost; the dark tide works its will—
A will it knows not. Ah, that sound once
more!

The stream flows swifter still:
See the small fulmar gliding by the mast;
The skua pursues him from the southern hill.

Nay, look ! Lo, there HE stands upon the
shore,

Divinely fair, and oh, the song he sings :
Of hopes to be and dim remembered things,
And winds our timid yearnings o'er and o'er !
No mortal yet hath seen a lovelier blue
Than watches us, inimitably rare,
And holds us till the beating pulse stands still ;
Nor ever waited on diviner lips,
Carven with love's infinitude of skill,
Whence the wild rhapsody unmeasured slips ;
Nor matched the shifting colour of that hair
And the bright skin, flushed with a richer hue
Than graced the fairest of earth's fairest fair.
Let us draw near and feast our hungry eyes
And gaze in mutest wonder, which is best,
On the white form of yon upraiséd arm,
The dainty throat and softly heaving breast,
And drink our fill of the ethereal charm
In the light feet and limbs of subtlest guise.

‘ Who sails afar on some remotest tide
And loses touch with all he holds most
dear,
Who bides, and wistful eyes the waters wide,
Draw near and soothe thy weary heart, draw
near.

‘ Who sails afar while all he loves is lost—
 For some prove false and some with Death
 have wed—

Who sets his hope, where hope is tempest-tossed,
 Draw near and learn the lay that wakes the
 dead.

‘ Who sails afar and finds that hope is vain,
 That Heaven has lost the key that turns the
 past;—

Thy Love hath loved another?—hear the strain
 That ravel[s] out the years behind thee cast.

‘ Who sails in doubt, nor trusts the grave’s deceit,
 Yet sighs beneath life’s unrelaxing bond,—
 Faith’s phantoms mock the weary traveller’s
 feet—

Draw near with clearer sight and look beyond.’

Ah! Hark the song! He sings a fuller hope
 Than the waste cravings ’neath this wind-swept
 cope.

Oh, wildering dream beside the untoward sea,
 How shall I live if I live not with thee?

.

Child, I am coming.—Is thy song for me?

SIXTEEN

IS he a god, with his thoughts aflame,
His words of power and his fathomless eyes?
Is he a god, with his wonderful dreams
From a land of lambent and luminous skies?

He is a man with his masterful lips,
His eager hands and his strong white arms.
He is a man, as she kisses his brow
And binds with the spell of her guileless charms.

Why did he love her, why did she come
So long before me and hold him fast,—
She with her beautiful form and face
And sensitive spirit and eyes downcast?

Stooped he and kissed me as I were a child;
As grave and calm as the wind in Spring.
Reaching my heart, it has burned my soul,
That passionless kiss, with its unknown sting.

Would I not give him all that I am,
Would I not love him even as she?
How should the Fates devise a doom
That cannot be cleared in eternity?

She has been first, and she stole from me ;

Nor would it be other if she were I.

Such is the justice of Fate's decree :

That one must prosper and one must die !

What is for me, whom he kissed as a child—

A girl too youthful to heed or to know ?

Naught is to seek, naught is to dream,

Naught is to come as the long years flow.

OFF NEWFOUNDLAND

MENALKAS

MENALKAS, hast thou come? Sit here with
me,

Where Lykabettos overlooks the town,
And Athens spreads between us and the sea,
In all her wealth of marbled pageantry,—
The peerless mistress 'of the violet crown.'

The same and not the same: the same proud
height

Rising above the city as of old,
The same familiar temples, gleaming white,
The same conception of the infinite,
By men rich wrought in ivory and gold.

The same unharvested, unkindly sea,
Dark, dark, wine-dark, down in its unplumbed
deep,
Which Homer imaged in his minstrelsy;
Yet, on its surface, laughter-lit and free,
Where emerald and turquoise lightly leap.

'Twas there our fathers fought, where Ajax'
isle

Lifts the long line of its low-lying hills,
And dreams of Salamis our hearts beguile,
And still we see them throng the narrow mile,—
On, on they press,—till pride our spirit fills.

But ah, Menalkas, these have passed away,
The ancient times are gone and all is change;
Here, witless of the past, fools praise to-day,
Or there, more wise, would fain arrest decay.
Yet all things flow, and each is passing
strange.

Yea, all things flow, yet, in the ceaseless stream
Of varying form, much were it ill to lose;
And many a vision in an outworn dream
Still holds a magic in its subtle gleam,
More splendid than the actual things we
choose.

Menalkas, with the beautiful dark eyes
And godlike form, surpassing Nireus' grace,
That all in the palaistra far outvies,
Where gather boys in beauteous exercise
And in a web of wonder interlace,

Menalkas, hearken. Not too much to these
Achievements of our later age give heed :
Our wealth amassed and longer hours of ease,
The light sensations that the gay crowd please—
These things are not the things of life indeed.

Herōn may boast that in the pent-up steam
He gains a boundless force to make man's
slave ;
But power and force are but an idle dream,
And veritably nothing will they seem
When Hades summons us to fill a grave.

Nor in the deftness of thy hands alone
Exult, nor in the swiftness of thy feet,
Nor in the loveliness that is thine own,
Unrivalled now, and heretofore unknown—
These too will pass, these too with death shall
meet.

For we are more than low material things,
And more than such our destiny sublime ;
And, though round these the dull heart dearly
clings,
Far on a flight of wondrous spirit-wings
The fates decree that we shall distance time.

Out from the primal Essence have we sped,
 Profound, immense, unknowable, and strange,
Transcending, as Xenophanes hath said,
All human concepts—hands, or feet, or head,
 Or voice, or all within our mortal range.

And thou dost ask, thou, with the searching
 eyes:—

‘But how shall we, if such indeed be God,
We, with the fleshly frame and mortal guise,
Hold commune with a power that never dies,
 Or gain a road that feet have never trod?’

Yea, hold, the question grows importunate,
 And in its answer lies our only hope,
Else, sinking, must we lose our high estate
And with the lower beasts our fortunes mate,
 And, having spurned the light, all darkling
 grope.

Ah, lovely boy, thy bright appealing gaze,
 Alert to catch the music of the spheres,
Thine eager lips, and wonder and amaze
At all the curious world’s unriddled ways,
 Call back my youth from the relinquished
 years:

And once again—athirst with strenuous zeal
Of boyish confidence and high intent—
I fain would fathom what the fates conceal,
And all the secrets of the world reveal,
Displayed in one victorious argument.

This is the breath divine: the wish to know,
The fervent and insatiable desire
To seek and hold each new thing ere it go,
And fan the flame of knowledge till it grow
Into an inextinguishable fire.

God is a spirit and we are but flesh;
Yet, even as Pythagoras hath told,
Do we, within the fleshly frame, enmesh
A spiritual shape, still breathing fresh
The fragrance caught from the diviner
mould.

God is a spirit; how can we attain
To that sublime communion unalloyed—
The mystic union unto which we strain
With voiceless utterance of eager pain
And striving hands that reach into the
void?

So unattainable, so far away,
Supernal and illimitably great,
Whom we may love, as infant children may
The wise controller of their simple day,
With whom they cannot yet communicate.

And God is wise, with wisdom absolute ;
Yet of his wisdom gives us each some seed,
That in our being quickens and takes root,
And may, with utmost effort, bear the fruit
That solves the mystery of our deepest need.

So the All-Wise, as wisdom's stores increase
And knowledge spreads, grows nearer than
before ;
The soul from fleshly trappings finds release
In close ecstatic commune of strange peace,
When, poised on knowledge' pinions, it can soar.

To learn, to know, to grasp each sovereign
truth—

This is the soul's escape from carnal ties ;
This is to consummate the dreams of youth ;
This is to be at one with God, in sooth—
The All-Pervading, infinitely wise.

This is the secret—see thou hold it fast :

Soul speaks to soul when knit by common ties ;
And if thou wouldst hold commune with the vast
Eternal Power who shaped the distant past
And holds all time, here, in truth's self, it lies.

Menalkas, thou art gone, and here with me

Leavest a light that nothing can dispel.
Knowledge is much, yet, as I think on thee,
In all thy wondrous youthful symmetry,
Surely in beauty God is gained as well?

ISLE OF FOULA

BEAUTY

WHEN Terror folds his wings and Fear is
ended

And the clear call for courage is no more ;
When the last sick and sorrowing are tended
And pain and poverty and dearth are o'er ;

When Hope, long languishing, has reached fruition
And Faith's fierce fight with Doubt is waged and
won,

And Mercy, Help, and Pity cease their mission
Because all Body's sins and wants are done ;

When all our feeble moral precepts vanish,
Mean in their outlook, narrow in their kind,
Confined to mere material needs, that banish
All loftier strivings of the immortal mind,—

Then, and not till then, shall our life have meaning ;
Then, and not till then, we begin to live,
And from these bodies' aims our spirits weaning,
First learning to BEHOLD, then learn to GIVE.

There in the twilight of the early morning,
 Filmed with faint flushes of the sunrise-fire,
We learn the marvel of the world's adorning
 Or in the flaming of the dead day's pyre,—

So glorious, so full of coloured gleaming,
 Yet for mere limbs' advantage not designed,
Nor bountiful, nor just, nor helpful seeming—
 Useless—and therefore of a nobler kind,

Great in itself and grand; though we no longer
 In this small planet play our petty part,
Something to which we rise, sublimer, stronger
 Than aught we seek, to please the mortal
 heart.

Up to its level therefore we, aspiring,
 Shall soar, nor seek to bring it to our own;
For this is Beauty: here is Art's desiring—
 That which is perfect in itself alone.

Or, as we stand before God's last creation,
 The human form, all naked and laid bare,
We learn to gaze in holy veneration,
 Lost in admiring wonder and despair.

Thus we BEHOLD, and, stung by fervid rapture
And dear desire that dreams it will create,
From the suggestive forms of nature capture
The hint of shapes we fain would consummate :

So the poiētēs, artist, the creator,
Transcending far our flesh-bound moral aims,
Shall GIVE a gift that is supremely greater,—
An end itself, that meets no outer claims.

Humbled, at length, with selfless admiration,
Our souls, long dead in things of use, find birth,
And in the spell of Beauty's contemplation
Know that the meek alone inherit earth.

S.S. 'VICTORIAN,'
MID-ATLANTIC

THE GUELDER ROSES

'NEATH sunny skies I glided on,
Where dazzling waters dancing shone
And sang their tuneful melody;
The whispering rushes o'er me swayed
And on my lips soft fingers laid:
I gently dipped the paddle blade
That drowned the stream's low rhapsody.

My slight craft drifted slow along;
Whelmed in a world of fairy song,
From every marge re-echoing.
An iris, swinging to and fro,
Sang with the lilies down below—
An elfin round no mortals know
Harmoniously following.

Lightly I skimmed the burning tide
Till cool shades crept from either side,
Where willows leaned in idleness.

Within dark pools I saw them peer
And trail their leaves through rippings clear ;
When strange new music met my ear
And held me by its gentleness.

I moored the boat beside the bank
And eagerly the music drank
In wonder, listening pensively ;
Then lifted up my head to see,
The guelder roses watching me,
Who marvelled what their song might be
Reiterating plaintively.

And while, entranced, I listened there,
They answered my unuttered prayer
And breathed on my mortality ;
Till all the unknown tongue grew plain,
The meaning of their varying strain
Where joy is interfused with pain
In limitless diversity.

Life's olden symphonies they sang,
Imbued with newer hopes, that rang
Through deeper chords of agony,
Where otherwordly measures steal
From lands which kindlier dreams reveal,
And woes of striving discord heal
In this rude world's cacophony.

There sleeps all passionate regret,
With lustrous lashes, gleaming wet,
 Worn by long watching wearily
For one whose footsteps ne'er will make
The unforgetful silence break,
Nor Lēthē's self avail to slake
 The drouth, consuming steadily.

A boon the roses gave that day
To one whose solitary way
 Had missed the haunts of happiness —
The gift to hear the flowers sing,
And, through their mystic message, bring
An anodyne to dull the sting
 Of life's unending loneliness.

The East Wind blew across to me
The last stars falling from the tree—
 Envoys of worlds most fanciful.
Still in the silence of the night
They sing, and visions infinite
Drift down the vistas of my sight,
 Immeasurably pitiful.

Sweet children of demurest air,
Pale blossoms woven through your hair,
 On shifting rainbows gathering,

Endowed with love's engaging mien
And crowding lips that toward me lean
Through little hands, outstretched between,
In sympathetic wondering.

Children, ye cannot understand,
Floating in that enchanted land,
The pathos of our helplessness ;
And yet your winsome faces bear,
Though ye yourselves are unaware,
The antidote of our despair,—
Exorcists of our hopelessness.

OXFORD

CHRISTINE

It is rarely that a poem is founded on an actual fact or personality, but the little girl to whom these lines are dedicated was a fascinating eleven year old maiden, whose charm intensified those thoughts and feelings with which in after years we approach the child. There is in childhood a something, whose power of attraction is well-nigh irresistible, which at the same time we feel it would nevertheless be sacrilege to touch. Small wonder that we expect to find such as the denizens of Heaven, and are confident that the unchildlike have no part therein!

DEMURE and silent fairy-queen, Christine,
What secrets lie those lips between?
What are the thoughts, too deep to rise,
Beneath the mystery of those eyes
That baffle all my enterprise, Christine?

We strain to catch the heavenly sheen, Christine,
That only childhood keeps serene,
And spend our passionate longing's cry
Calling from out an empty sky
The phantom of a day gone by, Christine.

I stole a kiss those lips between, Christine,
You deemed it was a theft, I ween,
But it was, oh, so sweet and pure,
And I have stored it safe and sure
'Mid dreams that die not but endure, Christine.

I know you know not what I mean, Christine,
You are too fresh and fair, my queen;
 Beneath our sullied atmosphere
 The dew-drop of the springing year
Lies on your whiteness round and clear,
 Christine.

Graced with the grace of childhood's mien,
 Christine,
Twelve years on earth you have not seen;
 Yet would you your own fate fulfil,
 And be no longer treated still
As a mere child against your will, Christine.

Had I the magic sword and keen, Christine,
To cleave the fates and intervene,
 None older would you ever grow,
 But linger alway looking so;
Yet it is selfish—and I know, Christine.

So fresh and pure and bright and clean, Christine,
Your power you do not know, wee queen;
 You tear our hearts out in our pain,
 Striving to touch youth's charm again,
And the impossible attain, Christine.

We search the dark world's wide demesne,
Christine;

Yet fondest hopes had ne'er foreseen
The fragile charm that you display.
We hold you fast, then stand away
In yearning wonder and dismay, Christine.

Vain was the broidered gabardine, Christine,
And gifts rich wrought with damascene:
What offering could be meet for thee?
Yet what a guerdon falls to me—
To fashion aught thine eyes may see, Christine.

You bade me no good-bye yestreen, Christine.
Why did you hide from me unseen?
Dost think we cannot feel these things—
Rare rays of sunlight taking wings,
While the old gloom around us clings,
Christine?

Such knowledge may you never glean, Christine,
This craving for what has not been.
Grief lies about us everywhere,
A touch, a turn, and it lies bare,
The old wound opens unaware, Christine.

God shield you, sweetest queen, Christine,
And keep for me your memory green :
Your soft hair blows about my face
And cools each weary, burning place,
My life still haunted by your grace, Christine.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES

THE ENCHANTRESS

I

DESIRE

SHE was so fair, and oh, her eyes were blue
That gazed, with soul-spent longing, through
the haze

Of silvery shimmerings in the noontide blaze.
How fierce the naked spell wherewith they drew !

And he was fair, the god of lissome thew
And youthful heat, drawn downward by that
gaze

To the dull earth's routine of nights and days
From the eternal glory that he knew.

From him, as through the ethereal vaults he
passed,

His deathless godhead melted into mist,
Till round her neck mere mortal arms he cast ;
While her whole soul, with overstrained desire,
Slipped in a burning vapour as she kissed,
Leaving her soulless and consumed by fire.

II

ANNIHILATION

So, less than mortal man—for man at least
Hath still some share in immortality—
He stood there doomed to more than death's
decree;
Yet drank he madly at love's golden feast.

And still his passionate purpose loud increased
Such utter loveliness unveiled to see;
Yet, as the day waned, never answered shé,
Until at length his striving utterance ceased.

Wistful he watched, the while his life drew back
And drifted to the nothing and the dark.
Not even death was his; nor sign nor mark,
Faint traced on earth, in Hades, or the skies—
Blank utmost—nay, nor grief nor torturing rack.
And lo, she sat and stared with vacant eyes.

III

DOOM

There, on the bitter ground, white cold he lay,
Who once had been a god and still was fair,
Olympian-thewed, with mighty form laid bare,
Flushed faintly with the sunset's last estray.

Then from the West the wind awoke to play,
And whirled the rifted rain-clouds through the
air,
And drove the drops through all his gleaming
hair—
A fateful presage of his swift decay.

So she rose up and laughed, and down the stream,
Drearily the hollow echo mocking sped ;
So strange a thing—to feel her soul had fled
And yet for ever live in deathless guise,
Void of all purpose, aimless as a dream.
And still she stands and stares with vacant
eyes.

AVENBURY

BITTER-SWEET

O CHILD, with dreamland glory in thy hair,
Soft blown about thy brows serene and
white,

What are those memories interwoven there
That burn into my soul with tense delight?

Eyes that I love look through those wondrous
eyes,

Lips I have kissed so oft are in thy smile ;
All that I hold most dear 'neath distant skies,
Thousands of leagues afar, is here awhile.

And yet thou art thyself, and all thine own
Thy winsome charm and strange, alluring mien ;
And thus thy double spell is o'er me thrown,
And in thy magic world thou art my queen.

Across my life, storm-tossed and home bereft,
Fate wafts this opening rose of girlhood's grace,
And in Fate's garden not a bloom is left
Worthy by thee to claim the humblest place.

.

Thus, child, we pass ; out of the dark I came
And back into the dark I fade and go.
All things once more will be for you the same,
But for myself it cannot now be so :

Two faces evermore for me will blend ;
The world can never be the same again ;
Thy form will haunt me till life's farthest end,
Another bitter-sweet of mystic pain.

And, after life itself has spent its day,
Is there no hope to read the riddle there,
But must we find eternity's vast way
A second maze of unexplained despair ?

Ah, child of beauty, couldst thou grant me this :
Lift up thy little face and queenly head,
And let me print thereon one reverent kiss,
As one with holy awe might kiss the dead !

BAY VIEW, MICHIGAN

THE SONG

'MID many thoughts, the Mind once shadowed
forth

One, that amid the weaker host grew strong;
And unto this the Voice gave utterance,
And lo! the phantom thought became a song.

The Hand that served, and knew that yet there
stretched

The unending cycle of the eternal years,
Wrote down and gave it immortality—
'Tis written—and forgot—and disappears.

And Mind and Voice grew tired and passed away,
Where silence holds the unjust and the just.
And Hand, that once was Hand, returned again
To that it was before, and fell to dust.

But afterward men found the song and sang,
And sang it well or ill, or right or wrong;
Yet, though the singer sing it well or ill,
Do thou forget the singing in the song.

EALING

PHILISTOS AND NEAIRA

NO 'love' had I as those my friends, the youths
I met at our palaistra. How they talked!
And in unguarded moments secrets slipped,
Or one unwittingly would hit the mark,
And at some name, Praxinoë or the like,
The fair cheeks reddened. But all this to me
Meant nothing. Nor for me did any maid
Blush as I passed, though straightly built and tall,
Philistos, son of Melanippides.
And swift of foot was I beyond my peers;
Yea, once at far Olympia was I crowned.

But on a day I sat and watched the games
And felt a shaft that stung me suddenly,
And knew that Eros sent it, and it burned.
Yet 'twas a vague, indefinite desire;
No face that I had seen came hauntingly
To shape itself anew before mine eyes.
But through the silence of the vacant night
I lay and tossed and wished the thing might be;
And in the day grew moody, and forsook
My comrades, and would walk alone and grieve,

Because I had no 'love' as those my friends,
The youths I met at our palaestra, there,
Hard by the temple, Aphrodite's shrine;
Till at the last I offered daily prayers
Before the Sea-born One, that she might hear
And rid me of the gnawing at the heart
And leave me as before.

No answer came:

Days grew to months, and I grew lean and spare;
Until one eve, as Helios passed away
Beneath the West, with all his panting steeds,
Whose fiery breath incarnadined the heavens,
I saw, within the passing of a dream,
The radiant grace of Aphrodite's form,
Who stooped and whispered: 'Come to me myself.'

And she was gone; and all the livelong night
I lay and pondered what the vision meant,
But ere the dawning strenuously resolved
To journey north to Mount Olympos straight,
And for myself behold what things might be
On those great heights of limitless renown.

So forth I fared; and as day followed day,
Footsore and weary, travel-stained, forspent,

Somehow, I know not how, my heart was raised
From out its sadness. Kindly Hope once more,
Of which old Pindar sings, renewed my strength.
I gained at last the very steeps themselves,
And climbed among the sharp and cruel crags,
And fell and rose again, and toiled and strained,
Until I reached the snow and slippery rocks.
Then as by miracle I struggled on,
Escaping death, but bruised and wounded sore,
And found myself outside the gate of heaven,
Wrought all of bronze, with marble porticos,
And entered in and found my goddess there.

Oh, golden was her laughter, gold her hair,
And blue her deathless eyes as from the north!
The Knidian goddess, that Praxiteles
With cunning hands most deftly wrought, would
seem

Beside her but a rough-hewn shapeless mass.
And on her right stood Love, so slim and tall,
O'ertopping just her shoulder white and bare,
His eyes unbound, and round about his head
A gleaming fillet made of wild desire;
While in his eyes the love-light fiercely burned,
Calling to my remembrance that fair boy,
Pantarkes, who once gained the wrestling match,

And Pheidias fashioned on the throne of Zeus ;
But all the godhead shone in every limb.
And in his presence, through my tingling blood,
There pulsed the throbbings of undying love.

Then, as I stood within the brazen gates,
She came toward me, and her lovely hand
She softly passed throughout my curling hair,
And gently pressed my forehead back and spake
In mellow words, and asked: 'What wouldst
thou, child?'

But I could only gaze upon her face
And weep. Then, as she looked at me and
smiled,

A strange, sad pity on those wondrous brows,
My lips found speech and all my heart its need.

'Give me,' I prayed—although I knew not why
My heart thus yearned—'give me no lady proud,
But one still innocent, and let her years
Number the nights the perfect moon has seen
From new moon to the full, and let her have
Not knowledge, but the will to know, and eyes
Like Love's eyes, luminous with burning fire.'

Then Aphrodite raised her queenly head
And said: 'I know of such an one, and she,
For the great love I bear thee, shall be thine,
And I shall give her unto thee myself.'

So spake she, and then passed away; but Love
Remained; and he and I were left, we two,
Alone on heaven's door-sill, gazing down
At the great world with all its care and woe.
Then on my knee he laid his hand and said:
'Lift up thy face, and stretching forth thine arms,
Let loose thy dreaming soul until it sink
Below the secret waters of mine eyes.'
And so I placed my arms above his arms,
And on his supple shoulders laid my hands,
And gazed into those deeps, and there beheld
What never mortal eye had seen before,
Nor ever mortal eye shall see again,
And drew from them their spell, and learned to
love
With love that loves and never can grow old,
That neither hate nor scorn, nor cold neglect,
Nor any passing of the years can change.
And, as I looked upon his perfect form
With all its rippled modelling, I felt
That I, in turn, drew all about myself
A beauty as the beauty of a god—
A lesser god, yet far transcending man.

I cannot tell how long the time that passed,
But at the end he kissed me on the lips—

The god himself—and thrilled me through and through ;

Then, pressing both his hands upon my heart,
He bowed his head, and breathed across my face
A fragrant breath, and gave immortal life,
If I but kept the bidding of the gods
And never sought but what was beautiful,
And, high of soul, ne'er let my courage fail.

He rose, and left me sitting dazed and still—
A moment and no more ; for through the gate
Came Aphrodite, leading by the hand
The fairest daughter of the sons of men,
Neaira, daughter of Alkinoos.
And softly fell her name upon my ears—
Neaira—as some sighing summer wind.
She ran to Love, and hung about his neck,
The sweetest flower of girlhood's innocence ;
But Love laughed gently, and his mother came
And took the child, and brought her unto me
That I might see how perfect, past compare
She was. And now may fate avert from me
All fell mischance, for unto me she seemed
More beautiful than Aphrodite's self,
Because, with all the beauty of the one,
She had the tender innocence of youth.

But Aphrodite read my thoughts and smiled,
And drew the child toward her, till she leaned
'Gainst Aphrodite's bosom ; and the twain
Faced me, until I knew not how to live,
So tense the strain of undiluted joy.

But, as the night hard follows on the day,
Within those truthful azure eyes I glanced
And saw she shrank from me and loved me not,
Nor ever would, for all I might foretell.
Then back I turned to Love, and prayed that he
Would take away his fell immortal gift,
That I might die. For this surpassed the pain
Of all the nameless longing on the earth.
But Love regarded me with speaking eyes,
A sad light shining in their glowing depth,
As he replied to me: 'Not yet, not yet,'
And turned, and with the tenderest of farewells
Passed out of sight adown the vaults of heaven.

But Aphrodite came and sat by me,
And brought the maiden, speaking soft to her ;
And, as we viewed the teeming land and sea
And all the sons of men who toiled below,
She drew the maid toward her, and the child
On Aphrodite's arm her sweet head laid,

And turning half toward me told us all :
About her home on earth, her snow-white doe,
The mighty hound that ever guarded her
Whenso she went beyond the marble halls
On some dear ministration to her kin,
The woven web and fancy's broidered scenes,
The garden and the limpid waterways,
The flowery glade, the swiftly darting birds,
Till fain she would be back again at home.
And Aphrodite rose and took her hand
And led her by a secret pathway down.

So would she come to us from day to day,
While I in patience waited calmly still,
Doing some humble service for the gods
About the echoing porches of the gate,
In hope that time would soon accomplish all.

Till on a day I heard Love's silvern voice,
That told me how the fateful hour was come
When she would now be weanéd from her home.
And through the morn we sat there as before,
While bright the sunshine danced about her feet
And gentle breezes played within her hair.
I told her of the glorious deeds of old,
And watched the wonder in her opening eyes,
And listened to her tales of maiden joy,

With witching skill most delicately told.
Yet, though the child would talk, she loved me
not;
Nor, when at eventide she bade good-bye,
And passed with Aphrodite to her rest
Within the gates of heaven, did she give
The least return to all my gift of love.

Then were the gates shut fast, and I was left
Alone outside and watched the starry dark,
And prayed and wept by turns, and all my heart
Seemed scorched and seared with blistering fires
of love.

So next day and the next, until I felt
My heart was dying though my body lived,
Endowed with Love's most curst immortal gift:—
Yet man knows nothing and the gods know all.

One day came Love again, whom Zeus had sent,
Unknown to me, upon a fateful quest,
And now, the quest fulfilled, we met once more
Before the mighty brazen gates, and Love
Bade me take courage; much was yet undone—
Deeds to achieve upon the weary earth
Beyond the victory I won that day
Where far Alpheios flows and I was crowned.

And then he took my hand, and thus he spake :—

‘There lies beyond the far Ægean Sea,

Where Mysian Hills slope downward to the wave,

A hollow pool, with moss-grown rocks begirt.

Tall ferns lean o’er it; on its face there float,

About the marge, great lilies, luscious white;

But in the midst can no man fathom it.

’Tis told it goeth downward to the sea,

Where, through the gloomy caves, Poseidon roves,

And draws its store from some eternal spring.

And there the nymphs have ever had their
haunts,

And there Poseidon grants them their desires.

The entrance lies between two towering crags,

A cleft, so narrow few may enter it,

While it is guarded by a monstrous shape,

Part human and part beast, that sits within.

And Hermes tells how he hath heard of late

That, prisoned there, a winsome boy abides,

Like unto thee, and most serenely fair.

Men called him Hylas; and, long years ago,

The nymphs, for all his beauty and his grace,

Him stole and captive held by magic lures,

And by strange charms have kept him ever
young,—

An agile boy, first flushed with fires of youth.

But never will he hearken to their plaint
And join them in their circling round of games,
Stirring the glassy surface of the pool,
But sits aloof with large and wistful eyes.
Him mayst thou win, and, winning, win thyself;
And, having proved thyself, must win her love.

Take thou the road past Tempē to the sea,
And there await the coming of a ship;
And if the sails be bright all favours thee,
But if the sails be dark the way is hard,
And thou must fear Poseidon's darkest guile,
Who loves not her who from the foam did rise,
Yet loves the long-haired water-nymphs full well.
Though even then it may be thou shalt win,
If thou hast heart surpassing all thy peers.'

He spake, and led me down the secret stair,
And fled, while I turned eastward to the sea.
And there I gazed all day, until the sun
Stood straight behind me: and there was no wind.
When, far across the deep, with swelling sail,
A white ship hove in sight, and nearer drew,
And all my heart was glad to see her come,
Until at last I saw her spars and ropes,
And men upon her decks, and heard their cry.
When lo, away beyond her I beheld,

Under the windless sky, another sail,
Dark as the coming night and swifter far.
And as she came the first ship passed away,
And in the night, just as the moon arose,
The dark ship came to land beneath my feet.

Yea, dark as wrath she was, a thing of dread,
Unnamed, unspeakable, and horror-filled.
I called to mind the face of her I loved,
And all afraid, yet fighting terror down—
For, even thus, it might be I should win—
Arose, and trembling stood upon the cliff.

I clambered down, and found a little boat,
And put out swiftly till I reached her side,
And flung a rope astern, and climbed aboard.
I asked them whence they came and whither
bound,
But no man answered, though they looked at
me ;
And in the stillness glided we away.

Swarthy they were, and lean and lank and tall,
And moved as noiselessly as shades in dreams,
And silently the ropes slipped through the sheaves.
She seemed as though she moved within a world
Not ours, or in another age than this,
The sport of wind and change I could not see.

For when the breeze was still she often sped
And heeled as in a blast. At other whiles
She sailed against the wind, or yet again,
Upon an even keel, she rode at rest,
While tempests raged and lightning filled the
skies.

Yet sometimes would her fickle mood comply
With wind and wave I saw before my eyes.
Methought, it might be, she was sailing now
Within the weather, long since passed away,
In which the Argo sought the golden fleece,
And beautiful Absurtos met his death.

Two days and nights I sailed with that strange
crew,

Nor ever, all that while, they heeded me,
Yet filled me with unutterable fear,
E'en ere I guessed the thing that I have told
Or knew the things I yet perforce must tell.
Twice had the dawn appeared since we set sail,
And I sat gazing by the dancing prow
While one by one they drew toward the stern.
I shuddered as I watched them gathering there
In that still silence, aching as a dream.

Fierce was the sun and hot upon the deck,
And they were drinking from a goodly cup,

Rich wrought with weird devices passing strange,
And, in unwonted wise, the wine within
Seemed glowing as I dared to draw anigh.
The cup was passing round, and slowly came
Nearer, and nearer still, until at length
It was at hand, within my very reach;
Nor could I stay myself, but, by some power
Impelled beyond my will, I made as though
I fain would drink, and asked if I might share.
The man that held it turned, but never spake,
And stretched his long gaunt arm and bony
hand,
And proffered me the golden cup to quaff,
And fixed me with his great and hollow eyes,
Low sunk and cruel in a face like death.
And I was held as by some awful fate,
And could not, though I would, restrain my hand,
But drank the rich red draught, and as I drank
I knew the look and knew the taste was blood.

I shrank back mazed and utterly undone.
They moved not; but their fierce eyes followed
me,
And, though I hid, I saw them watching still,
Piercing my heart right through the very boards.
Then, with a cry that wrung my inmost soul,

I tried to call the vision to my sight
Of that sweet maiden on the heights of heaven,
And, as the dream-face passed down memory's
ways,

I felt my courage come to me again.
'Twas well, because next morn, all unawares,
As I leaned o'er and watched the silver wake,
White gleaming in the sombre wine-dark sea,
They came behind and seized me by the hair,
These minions of Poseidon's mighty wrath;
And, ere I knew, they rent away my clothes—
For all my struggles were of no avail—
And bound me to the mast with cruel thongs
That cut my naked flesh as they were knives.

And there I stood, scorched by the blazing
sun,

The same still silence hanging o'er the ship,
While they made mock at me with hollow eyes,
That reeled in dizzy shapes before mine own.
The hours crept grimly, dragging lame and slow,
Distilling drops of unremitting pain,
While I made effort to uplift my head
And strove to show my spirit feared them not;
Although my thoughts flew far and oversea
To Hylas, waiting for my worthless aid,
Wistful, with watching eyes and weary fears.

Night followed day and day in turn the night,
Till, with my senses numbed by utter pain,
I hardly saw the silent deathly crew,
Or knew their flashing weapons and desire.
But, in a half-delirious waking dream,
My loved one spake brave words and gave me
strength ;

Till, as the lightning cleaves the hollow dark,
I saw the storm-bird sweep across the sea
And terror shake their lean and haggard forms.
Low cliffs rose sudden from the seething foam,
The winds forgathered o'er the broken deep
And drave the sounding waters on the shore,
Till all the land was flecked with driving foam
And all the sea with spindrift was obscured.
And we upon that wild and wintry waste
Drave straightly through the raging of the blast
As helpless iron hammered from the forge ;
Till one great mountain of tumultuous green
Flung the frail barque upon the brazen crags
And swept her clear of life before my face.

Then for one moment were their tied tongues
loosed,
And, as they vanished in the treacherous gulf,
I heard their cries unearthly and aghast,
That shrieked in one long wail of strained despair,

With hopeless vows and direful agonies.
And echo, mocking, tore their words to shreds
And flung them down the wind-tormented air ;
For man is but the phantom of a shade.

No more I knew until I found myself
Within the shelter of a sandy bay,
The mast half broken and the thongs nigh slipped.
I freed my limbs and sat and bowed my head
And pondered on the things that were to be.
Long time I paused, and then, with many a toil,
Set forth upon my way, and found myself
In smiling vales of quiet fruitful fields,
And homesteads dotted on the peaceful slope—
A land of rest and solace after pain.
And there I met a lovely brown-eyed girl,
And told her of my shipwreck and dismay,
Who took me to her father's house ; where they,
Though simple folk, attended me right well,
And healed me of my hurts till I was whole,
And told me of the awful haunted hills
And mighty, brooding shapes and chilling powers.
So, when they heard the venture I essayed,
They warned me how, though many had gone forth
From time to time to penetrate the glens
That opened darkly from the sunny plain,

Where far away the mountains reared their heads,
None ever had returned; and even those
Who only wandered to the mountain foot
Saw sights of fear so terrible and strange
As e'en to leave them witless; or again
Were found, when morning broke, destroyed by
death.

And beautiful Mandanē stretched her arms
All sunburnt, with a richly glowing tint,
And begged me to remain. And thus it came,—
My soul, alas, was taken unawares,
And viewed the terror of the journey passed—
The thirst, the pain, the men, the raging sea—
While here was tranquil calm and still repose.
The unknown road was full of nameless ills.
None ever had escaped, and how should I?
For if my heart should quail at any pain,
Or, if I winced before the gathering blow,
Then Eros' gift would flee and death would come.
Hope was there none. Should I in vain set out
To meet a certain doom, and nevermore
My name be heard of anywhere again?
Or should I take the chance the gods had sent,
After my dread and weary wanderings—
A sign that such a quest was not for me?

I knew not how to reach my land again,
And here was plenty, 'mid the happy corn
And golden orchards; and, beyond all else,
Was beautiful Mandanē calling me
That I should stay.

How wonderful she was,
With strong brown limbs and glorious eyes, and
hair

As dark as night that tips the solan's wings,
Made darker by the contrast with the light.
And she would love me—that I knew full well
Within the very fibre of my soul.

Then suddenly my heart recoiled again;—
Had I not ventured even to the death?
And death, if death were mine, I would not flee,
In whatsoever cruel guise he came;
And that I had attempted I would do.

So came it that I bade them all farewell,
With countless thanks for all their kindness
done,

And once again set forth upon my path.
Mandanē, bearing gifts within her hands
Of fruit and wheaten cakes herself had made,
A little way came with me on the road:
And as we parted tears were in our eyes,

And strange emotions stormed within my soul
Because of all the darkened ways of fate.

I journeyed on along the coast afar,
Throughout a questing round of hours and days.
At length the sun revealed a narrow cleft,
Through which I barely forced my arduous way,
And came upon a hollow in the rocks,
A dim, delicious haunt of silver streams,
With shady canopies of mountain trees,
And saxifrage and gentian, blue as heaven,
And mosses, flecked with white Parnassus grass,
And in the midst the very pool itself.

Then, as I looked, my beating heart stood still
To see such beauty spread before my gaze :
Fair nymphs with flowing hair about their knees,
And snowy forms transfused with sunset glow,
Stately and tall, and, as they swiftly moved,
They evermore revealed some new delight :
The soft white shoulders peeping through their
hair,
Or poise of head on neck of slender grace.

And yet, beyond all these, more beauteous far,
Divinely moulded, exquisitely rare,
At the last margin of the lilled pool,

Hylas himself leaned low with mournful eyes,
Dowered with loveliness the uttermost,
Full strong and lithe as man could ever be,
Yet graced with tender subtleties of form
No woman might excel, and, crowning all,
A spiritual beauty more than heaven.

They saw me as I stood there in amaze,
And cried: 'Another Hylas for our mate,
Mayhap more kind, to sport and play with us.'
And so, with one accord, they left the pool
And ran toward me with their witching grace;
Nor could I flee, for there was Hylas' self,
For whose release alone I ventured all.
And yet I turned to view the way I came,
And there beheld, low crouching by the gate,
A shape, repulsive, gaunt, and evil-starred,
Not wholly man, with twisted, sinewy limbs,
Like unto him that steered the hollow ship,
Less human seeming, if such thing might be.
Then met our eyes, and lo! he was the same,
And he devoured me with malignant hate.

I turned; they closed around me, laughing light,
And drew me to the margin of the pool
And fell to coaxing me to play with them.

I glanced at Hylas, and then made my mind
To humour them and gain my emprise thus,
Playing about their spell-bound lily pool;
Till as the dark drew on they tired of play,
And I crept near to Hylas in the gloom
And softly, speaking low, I told him all.

So passed the days, and ever that gaunt shape,
Saved by Poseidon's aid to work me woe,
Guarded the gateway of the narrow rocks.
At first I deemed he never slept, but lo,
I found that if it were that Hylas slept,
He slumbered also, as by magic lulled,
But, whensoever the boy awoke, he too
Aroused himself and watched with evil eye.

And so one night, toward the early dawn,
While yet the moon was overhead and bright,
I raised the radiant boy within my arms
Most tenderly, lest I should waken him,
And stole full softly to the rocky gate.
And oh, how fair he was! I fain had kissed
Those long dark lashes of his sleeping eyes.
But near the narrow portal he awoke.
'Speed swift,' I cried, and on we fled again.
He gained the cleft, but as I touched the rock

The gaunt, gigantic guardian of the gate
Stretched out his bony arm and hurled a block
Of mighty stone athwart the open space
And severed us, and then with claw-like hand
He tore my face and sorely spoiled my limbs,
And flung me on the banks above the pool.

So when the morn appeared the lovely nymphs
Bewailed my form and rent their wondrous hair
For Hylas that was lost and me destroyed.
Full lovingly they bathed my many wounds,
And waited on my needs with skilful hands,
Until they almost won from me my love,
So winning were they, with such simple grace,
Reminding me of her I left in heaven,
Who drew me ever as a homing star ;
Nor gave they credence to the guardian's tale,
But laid on him a spell unspeakable,
For that he thus had shattered their delight.

And, when the time was full, my wounds were
healed ;
But I was seared and scarred and sorely maimed,
And all my beauty gone for evermore,
Till wept the nymphs whene'er they looked at me,
In pity, and because I vexed their sight.

So to the monstrous villain at the gate
They turned, and loudly they upbraided him
And spake in anger: 'Open out the cleft;
For lo, we had a boy to play with us,
And beautiful withal beyond compare,
But you have spoiled him, and our eyes no more
Can take their pleasure in his godlike grace.
So must thou let him go, thou loathéd thing,
For that he now is hateful to our sight,
When in the mazy dances on the sward
He intertwines his ruined form with ours.'

Thus then I went away, and as I passed
I heard their tears soft falling by the pool,
And caught the cadence of their vain lament:

'No more, no more, he comes to us no more,
No joy of yestere'en can e'er return;
And youthful beauty, once 'tis clouded o'er,
No winds can clear or fan its flames to burn.

'We dance our round with one no longer here,
The while the void recalls the shape we miss;
And idle memories play about his hair
And print upon the perfect throat a kiss.

'Our selfish love, half petulant and proud,
Pities her own sad fortune and despair,
Yet in supreamer moments wails aloud
That pain should fall upon a form so fair.'

And down I sped, and found upon the shore
Hylas still waiting, watching o'er the wave.
And as I reached the strand a ship appeared,
Dark-sailed and swart; and after that a white,
With kindlier sail and comelier guise, drew nigh.
And on her deck we sailed a silver sea,
While music, low, melodious, lulled our care,
And all our long woe lifted from our souls,
Until we glided smoothly to the land.

And Herakles himself came down the slope
And, taking Hylas gently by the hand,
Too overjoyed for speech, he led us both
Up the vast valley and the secret stair.
The brazen gates swung open, and within
Passed Herakles with Hylas at his side,
Oft looking back, till he was seen no more.

And Aphrodite met them as they went,
And hastened forward to the sounding gates,
Leading my flower of perfect innocence,
To whom in part she showed my woes endured.
So drew she near and saw my piteous plight,
And, with a little cry of joy and grief,
Ran toward me, and, unlike the soulless nymphs,
Fickle and charming in their idle love,

Drew down my face, all scarred, and passed her
hand,

Her little hand, across my injured brows,
And laid her other hand upon my own
And pressed it gently, bowing low her head;
While letting fall great tears of pity's self
With admiration nigh akin to love.

And Eros, too, drew near; and once again
We met before the brazen gate, and he
Would hear my tale; and so I told them all,
Upon that very door-sill, gazing down
Where we had talked so many moons ago.
Love looked upon me with those searching eyes
As I approached the ending of my tale.
'But for my boon,' said he, 'thou hadst been slain;
Such was the strength of my immortal gift.
But beauty lost I cannot give thee twice,
Yet hearken unto me and follow well;
And unto her that sitteth at thy side
Do as thou didst with me, and lay thy hands
Upon her shoulders, small and white and bare,
And gaze within those eyes as into mine,
And all thy beauty thou shalt yet regain—
Not all at once, but slowly—and at last
Thou shalt be fairer even than before.

But must she love thee first; although as yet
She hardly knoweth love's significance,
So childlike is her sympathy and grief;
And even this may be a pang to thee,
But take thou courage.'

So his mother came
And brought the child, and Love drew forth a dart,
The while I hid my eyes, lest I should see
The thing I knew would follow. As I stooped
I heard a cry that pierced my soul itself,
And looked again, and in her tender breast,
The loveliest that ever nature formed,
I saw the cruel dart. With careful haste
I drew it forth, and as her eyes looked up,
With just a little pouting of the lips,
I bent me down and took my first long kiss,
And felt the little arms about my neck
And drank the pure white love of innocence;
Then looking up, with rising words of thanks,
We found ourselves alone and they were gone.

Once more they came, and gave to us to build,
Beside the gate of heaven, a fadeless bower;
And there we dwell, and Hermes passes forth,
And turns again, and tells us all that is.

While we by day attend upon the gods
And do them service; or Apollo comes,
And, sitting at his feet, we learn the truths
That underlie the universal change.
Or, yet again, 'tis ours to pass below
And ease the care of some poor mortal wight,
Sharing the while his toil or pain with him;

But, when the best of work is duly done,
A better best than all the god supplies
When in our fadeless bower alone we sit
And gaze deep down into each other's eyes.

O Love! O Love! we turn our eyes to thee,
And watch thee shaping all the world's desire;
All we have known, or hoped, or dared to see,
Is gladly burned to feed thy flaming fire.

We bring thee pearls and chrysolites of fame,
And wealth in ruby, emerald, and gold,
And power in blinding diamonds all aflame,
Or sapphires of our youth and strength untold.

We drag thy woeful car as willing slaves,
We gain our greatest griefs in serving thee,
Yet rail at death because, within our graves,
He breaks our bonds and sets the captive free.

Draw near us at the end with one last kiss,
O Love! O Love! with lips all fire again,
And if there be another world than this,
'Tis none for us without Love's mystic pain.

EDINBURGH

LOVE'S VISION

I. SPRING

II. AUTUMN

III. IN TWELVE MONTHS

IV. AFTER

LOVE'S VISION

I

SPRING

FOR me the great slow years are more than
years

As I look back along the lengthening way;
Seen through the sombre veil of memory's tears—
The castle-heights are grey.

Can that be I, the graceful lad I see,
My lady's page, with sad and wondering eyes,
His head flung back and hands about his knee,
Watching in wistful wise?

High rose her walls above the stream below
That circled round the base of that stern tower,
And all night long one heard the unceasing flow
Beneath my lady's bower.

Through silent hours, within the casement seat,
 'Mid white, piled clouds, I built me strongholds
 vast,
Where she and I might view beneath our feet
 The world's dominions cast.

And ever from the window would I bend
 To watch the broidery on her golden frame,
And marvelled to behold the colours blend
 In hues no tongue could name.

Great shapes grew real that the poet feigns :
 Heroic deeds among the Latian Hills,
The Sabine rape, and steeds with tossing manes
 And fiery, untamed wills.

Thus would I oft the golden hours beguile,
 Awed by the forms her fingers deftly trace ;
Or, bolder grown, spell-bound and rapt the while,
 I drew my lady's face.

A fragile blossom of the early Spring,
 Her years scarce more than moons the year
 has seen,
Yet, in her girlhood's slender fashioning,
 The grace to deck a queen.

The meanest service flushed my soul with pride,
While haughty serving dames provoked my
hate:—

Their right to tire her hair! Ah, woe betide
The mocking gulf of fate!

I trained her falcon, and her tender smile
Turned my world's darkness to a land of light,
And in delirious dreams I wrung awhile
Sleep's ransom from the night.

And once—yea, once, but once alone, ah me!—
My service gained the long dream-fancied bliss,
And o'er her little hand I leaned, and she
Freed my lips' prisoned kiss.

But never nearer did my soul draw nigh,
Nor knew more deeply than mere fancies see;
For a great knight, of noble lineage high,
Stole her away from me.

II

AUTUMN

SO back unto my father's halls I turned
In a mazed stupor. Day succeeded day,
Yet brought no pain. No passion ever burned;
No hope was left for which I might have yearned,
Nor aught for which to pray.

My father died and left me lord of land
While yet a boy—great wealth of vale and hill,
Rich pasture and wild wind-swept rocky strand,
Where the bleak waters surged on every hand
And communed with my will.

Then did I choose a chamber in a tower,
That caught the warm glow of the Western rays,
Lofty and far apart. There hour by hour
Full many a man employed his utmost power,
Skilled in a thousand ways,

For, choice arcades I built around the wall,
And set four triple lights of double planes
And orders rich. On clustered columns tall
I raised a vaulted roof above them all
With love's exceeding pains.

Black marble from Eleusis formed the floor,
And on its gleaming inky sea was made,
Betwixt the farthest columns from the door,
A base, with traceried panels covered o'er,
Of dulled, unpolished shade.

And with mine own hands carved and placed I
there,
Of Parian stone, translucent, cold, and white,
Her little face, framed in its flowing hair,
That flecked her slender throat, so soft and
bare,
Of infinite delight.

And on her brow I placed a coronet
And round about her neck a golden chain,
And where all beauty in the whole world met,
E'en on her lips, that time alone I set
My kiss of bitter pain.

And then, because she loved me not, I wrought
And fixed a silver barrier hard and fast,
Where I might kneel and gaze in silent thought,
Counting the empty present all as naught,
And contemplate the past.

Each morn, betwixt the barrier and the base,
 I laid fresh blooms of whitest cyclamen,
And all day long I looked into her face;
But, in the dark, I leaned across the space
 And swept it clear again.

III

IN TWELVE MONTHS

THERE in the garden in the early grey
 I broke the wonted fever of my sleep,
 What time my footsteps marked the dewy
 lawn,
And culled the wan white blossoms' pale display,
 Piling their fragrance in a pain-fraught heap,
 Then turned before the breaking of the dawn.

And there one morn I found a lovely child,
 Who stood and watched with wide, dark, won-
 drous eyes,
 Then shyly gathered flowers in her turn,
But spake not, only looked at me and smiled,
 And timidly drew near with sweet surprise
 Of childhood's sympathy and grave concern.

They were the same grey eyes, dark grey and clear,
 With some faint semblance of the hidden fire
 That burned my heart out in the older days.
I bowed me down to stay the stinging tear
 And the hot furnace of my vain desire
 Ere I passed back along the returning ways.

The following morn I found her waiting there
With wealth of fresh-blown blossoms silver
white;
And half within my hands she gently placed,
And half she bore herself with stately care,
And at my side she lightly trod the height
Past the steep stairs where the stern warders
paced.

Reflecting lights in that dim marble mere,
Beyond the silver rail we let them shine;
While still the sweet, cold face looked down
and smiled.
But as I stooped, and could not stay the tear,
I felt the small white hands were placed on mine,
And my proud heart was taken by a child.

And thus inspired, taught by a child, I learn
The bond that binds the world, before unknown.
So am I shut within myself no more,
Nor grief, as erst, his selfish hours doth turn,
But lightens the world's sorrows with mine own.

.

Yet the fresh blooms still deck the marble
floor.

IV

AFTER

YESTREEN I stood and gazed into night's deeps :
The world lay hushed, save for a gentle
breeze
That sighed as some soft sound of murmuring
seas,
Sweeping, in whispering portents o'er the steeps,
Strange secrets of the old, dim, haunted trees.

The Child lay sleeping ; else was none astir
Save I, who, leaning on the sill alone,
Strained eye and ear to catch the hollow moan
Of the true sea, beyond the waste of fir,
With glimmering grey and low, sad undertone.

So still she lay, so pure and frail and white
And paler 'mid the darkly framing hair ;
While on her little hand low lying there
Shone the great jewels in the dusky light ;—
Child, once a Child, and still unearthly fair.

Then from the West, beyond the severing sea,
From the moon's grave forth rose an orb of fire,
Whose lambent flames were fed by fierce desire ;
Till Heaven's far heights glowed as in agony,
As some wild sunrise sent by God in ire.

And near and nearer drew the flaming mass,
And opened out, and world on world revealed ;
Veil after veil is rent till, unconcealed,
Heaven towers above a sea of molten glass
And flings its image in the gleaming field

Until my eyes are strained, in spell-bound gaze,
Toward a throne upon that mystic shore
Of hopes regained and drifted days of yore ;
And back my memory turns in fond amaze
To find my boyhood's dreamings come once
more.

There, 'mid the isles of God, she sits serene,
While sweeps the wave around her rock-hewn
seat.

About my Lady's neck a child's arms meet,
And one has laid his head her knees between
And crouches on the ground betwixt her feet.

And, as the Child half leans upon the stone,
And turns the head till lightly falls the hair,
She shows those features 'STILL UNEARTHLY FAIR.'
The man's face lifts—and lo, it is mine own:
We three alone with God, and none else there.

WINCHESTER

Here endeth 'Love's Vision.'

THE DANCING-CLASS

A Reverie

IN sinuous lines they deftly trace
The whirling dance that moves apace,
Thread and rethread and interlace
 Athwart the floor;
Light limbs and little flashing feet
In dainty dresses swiftly fleet,
And white and blue and purple meet
 For me once more.

Oh, white-armed maidens, children fair,
With joyous eyes and flashing hair,
And movements rapturously rare
 Of grace untold,
Revealing, 'mid the mazy drift
Of silken folds that fall and lift,
The wonder in God's highest gift
 Of human mould!

Ah, sweetest face in all the throng!
Whose Keltic eyes gleam true and strong,
Blue molten fires 'neath lashes long,
 Be with me still;
And let thy raven tresses stream
Through all the windings of my dream,
Till, leaning o'er their source, I seem
 To drink my fill.

Ye too, whose witching footsteps sped
With light Terpsichorean tread
To those gay measures lately fled
 So fast away;
Yea, one and all come back to me,
That in my dreams I still may see
Each beauty live continuously
 In charmed array.

Yes, you whose feet outvied the rest,
And haunting gestures all expressed
More than our richest words and best
 Could ever tell,
Let once your slender shape again
Leap to the music's wild refrain,
Delirious, beating in my brain
 Beneath your spell.

And you, a queenlier Artemis,
Whose mien defies analysis,
With lips designed for gods to kiss,
 Come yet again,
And hold us far, as once of old
The maiden-huntress, overbold,
Would each elusive charm withhold
 In proud disdain.

And yet one more with tender gaze,
Who sees the end of childhood's days,
Yet knows not of the darkening ways
 That cannot fail.
Ah, children, could we, for your sake,
Give all we have for you to take,
Our lives, our hearts were yours to break,
 Could that avail!

But nothing steads; the dances lead
Through stranger dances, swift indeed,
With burning steps and feet that bleed,
 To fiercer strains.
Those little forms of girlish grace
Must bear the sorrows of our race
As the dark years bring on apace
 Unnumbered pains.

So the glad mood gives place to fears,
The laughing pageant disappears,
And whelmed by gloom of gathering years
Lights die that shone.

And I,—what is there left for me
As the last visions fade and flee,
Sitting and watching vacantly,
When all are gone?

SEASCALE

ISOLT

A Fragment

NOT that first Isolt, who from Ireland came
To dwell in old Tintagel by the sea,
Nor yet that fairer maid, who bore the name
And won in Brittany a purer fame,
Is she that keeps my burning soul aflame
And comes in dreams to me.

By night she comes in dreams, elusive, vain ;
But oh, my waking heart, when comes the day
That dissipates the eternal clouds of pain,
And eyes so long deceived behold her plain ?
Yet what, if I have dreamed, and dreamed again,
And dreamed my love away !

ISLE OF FOULA

THE BATHING-POOL

JULY, with lavish hand and sumptuous pride,
Flings all her rainbow splendour, blue and
green,
Gold, crimson, and rich purple, far and wide,
Nor heeds nor cares who love or who deride
What is or is not seen.

The river murmurs sleepily and low,
The landscape dances in the shimmering
haze;
My feet, unbidden, undirected, go
Meandering where the sullen waters flow
Beneath the noonday blaze,

And sudden pause, for through the heavy air,
Almost averse that it should let them pass,
Glad sounds of boyhood's laughter unaware
Strike on my ear, and plashings here and
there
Disturb the limpid glass.

Lo, where the sun upon the meadow shines,
A dream of youth—whence age, a rumoured
jest,
Bides far away—that in its boyish lines
Man's strength with more than woman's grace
combines,—
The Master-Sculptor's best.

Of such the singers in terrestrial choirs,
Impelling half-reluctant eld to bend;
And such the artist some true thought inspires
To image breathing o'er celestial lyres
The songs that never end.

And one I watch, with softly curling hair,
And deep-set eyes that shame the heaven's
sheen,
And delicate chiselled lips serene and rare,
Once known before, and see confront me there
My boy—that might have been.

The hope, that lingers ere the days grow late,
Burns dimly, flickers, smoulders, dies away.
When no more morrows fill the lap of Fate
'Tis some poor maniac lights his lamp to wait
And hope for yesterday.

My yesterday is dead, and left no heir
To live afresh in the new morrow's morn;
What the lean hands of this poor present spare
I clutch, and greedily consume it, ere
The leaner morrow's born.

And there, where yonder lovely pageant glows,
My straining eyes absorb each subtle line,—
The rhythmic swing enmeshed in every pose,
One instant poised; then, as the waters close,
I wish their touch were mine.

Must beauty's evanescent glory fade?
Those lithe limbs, flashing in the summer
light,
Glowing beyond all else that nature made,
Rose-tinted, warm, soft melting into shade,
Fall as the prey of night?

And long ago would they some answer crave,
Who watched the youthful loins ungirt at
play,
Yet time, nor change, nor death an answer gave.
'Twas nowise strange the nymphs, such grace to
save,
Stole Hylas, as men say.

No more the nymphs in haunted waters lie ;

No more may ye, as age-long captives borne,
Win endless youth. . . . Say ye the price too
high? . . .

Speak then—when all is lost and youth gone
by—

Decrepit and forlorn.

OXFORD

DYING HOPE

A lover sees his own reflection in the glass that covers
his lady's portrait.

MINE eyes still see her portrait, as of old,
The same sweet face—oh, would I saw it
yet!—

While Love's warm breath plays o'er my features
cold

And these my bloodless hands, that trembling hold
What no desire-fraught passion can forget.

And as I gaze mine image in the glass

Blends with her peerless image there below,
Our lips more close than when the kisses pass—
Herself in me, myself in her. Alas!

A mockery of a joy not mine to know.

O Love, O bitter Love, why weepest thou,

And with thy long wings shadowest thy head?
While, through the slender fingers 'neath thy brow,
I see the shining drops close stealing now.

Oh, tell me not that even Hope is dead!

So spent and wan thou art, thy silvern wings
 Droop sadly, and my heart scarce seems to
 know
Thy boyish tones in that sad voice that sings;
And the white thigh, 'gainst which the quiver
 swings,
Has lost the supple grace of long ago.

Sing me a happier song, let one note tell
 Clear 'mid the echoing wail; one hope be left,
Anon returning, as some tolling bell
Sounds a wild note above the organ swell:
 'Hope on, hope on, not yet of all bereft.'

And lift away thine hands, and once again
 Let me gaze deep within those deathless eyes;
Once wast thou wont to let me see them plain,
Not hidden, as for some, and I would fain
 Know the old Love, lost 'neath this piteous
 guise.

•

Bear her one kiss across the cold grey tide;
 Perchance she yet recalls some once loved day:
The burning talk this wind-swept shore beside,
The silent commune o'er a world spread wide
 Beneath us in yon city far away.

O Love, fly quickly, ere the last spark fails,
Ere that Too Late, whose name I dare not say,
Steals her away, and Hope no more avails
To stay the searching wind that shrilly wails
Round this bare heart's tower desolate and grey.

Love, thou art gone, and through the open door
I watch thy coming o'er the pain-tossed sea.
The white spray strives to kiss the stony shore,
The mocking winds but fling it back once more.
Love—I am dying—— Bring her back to me.

ISLE OF FOULA

THE MAGIC ISLE

I. THE WANDERING

II. THE ISLE

THE MAGIC ISLE

I

THE WANDERING

BEYOND the seas, beyond the changing skies,
Within a lake a magic island lies,
'Mid waters rippling in their lone retreat,
While trackless mountains all around arise
Far from the passing tread of mortal feet.

Few have essayed, and fewer yet have seen,
The mystic mere and those dim waters green,
And, of those few, how many have beheld
The silvan stillness of that isle serene,
Revealed a while and then again withheld?

For some it looms an instant and is lost,
As cloud-built towers vanish, tempest-tossed;
And some have trod the strand and learned too
late
That often may its spell-bound marge be crossed
Only to speed the hastening steps of fate.

There, through the clear green trees with fruit of
gold,

Hoar are the walls, the lintels worn and old.

Age-long enchantments guard the portals well;
For, in this far retreat, hath legend told

That in high halls the gods' own children
dwell.

Ah, with those children fair to sport and play

And fling all thought of age and time away,

Winning the smiles upon the fresh young lips,
Through the long laughter of a summer day,
Plucking ripe pleasure ere the moment slips!

But dire the deed he ventures who would dare,

E'en though he find the isle, to linger there;

For boding fate will steal away his breath
Unless some gift from those frail hands and rare
Shall stay the doom of dark, oncoming death.

Nay, but e'en now my memory fondly clings

Round each loved detail of the lightest things

That once befell me in the days of youth,
And sadly weeps to see them taking wings
Through the long, misty years that veil the
truth.

'Mid the great hills I roved, a lonely child,
Following the wind-borne voices, calling wild,
That sang into my ears and drew me on
Down the grey rocks in some dark corrie
piled,
Till, shrill with mocking laughter, they were
gone.

The creeping mists, the dark peat-laden burn,
The still loch, ruffled by the light-winged tern,
Alike were full of shadowy spirit things,
Sighing through heather and the bracken fern
With eerie sound of whispered communings.

I learned to seek for solace in that deep
Unhappy music on the haunted steep,
Companionless and wandering alone,
Where sobbing rains upon the wet hills weep,
In mournful utterance familiar grown.

Silent, reserved, unable to explain,
I was but dimly conscious of my pain;
Albeit at times, far faring down the glen,
My childhood's shyness opened out again
And drew my footsteps toward the haunts of
men.

A fairy child there was, with clouded hair,
And oftwhiles would we play together there ;
 Her lips were laughter and her blue eyes
 light ;
Winds softly called her name upon the air,
 And dreams of her would visit me by night.

Yet was she but a playmate of the hour,
Revealing just a shadow of the power
 That human intercourse alone can wield,
Beyond the most entrancing summer flower
 That the grey, brooding hills could ever
 yield.

And once I saw the Spirit of the Rain,
The harper of the far-foreseeing strain,
 Bowed low across the sadly dripping strings,
Pursued by shadows of men's souls in pain,
 Who gazed on him with silent questionings.

And, as he harped and sang, there grew to see
The unborn hours that yet one day may be.
 A few were sure, but most were still unmade,
Waiting for us to shape their destiny ;
 Some full of hope and some most sore
 afraid.

And, of them all, most vague were mine to
trace,

Tossed on strange seas or rolling hills of space,
And interspersed with flowery lowland glades ;
Yet ever loomed the shadow of a face,
Elusive in the darkest of the shades.

Too dim to catch, too dark to hold, but fair—
Yes, fair—amid the soul-entwining hair.

Ah, vain and vain ! I strove in vain to know
Those half-guessed features mocking my despair,
With slaying eyes and luring lips aglow.

Then sang the Spirit-Harper on this wise,
And, as the rain blew on my lips and eyes,
I deemed he sang the song for me alone ;—
‘The flower in all the world that never dies,
The flower that in the Magic Isle has grown,

‘The flower that blooms where loveliest blooms
enthrall,

A bloom more lovely even than them all ;
One flower more white than passion’s ecstasy,
Darkening the snowflakes even as they fall ;
One flower—nay, more—none other can there
be.’

My heart, my heart! I knew not what it
 meant,
That beating wave of gathering intent,
 Yet might I never more be satisfied,
Or with less fragrant blossoms be content,
 While ever land or sea remained untried.

And thus it came that o'er the hills I passed,
Till to the roaring sea I came at last,
 And out into the stormy dark set sail;
And, while the misty terror held me fast,
 Still rang the harper's song above the gale.

Far had I travelled, far o'er nameless land,
Far past Okeanos' remotest strand,
 And stood upon a steep and jagged height;
And there below me shone a silver band
 In the dark shades of an abysmal night.

A solitary pine scarce clung on high,
Its black, flat masses dark against the sky—
 The nearest tree lost in the depth below;
And far beneath was heard the curlew's cry,
 While, on the peak, wreaths formed and melted
 slow.

It was a place of silence, though the air
Was woven with sad murmurs everywhere :
The breathing wind that swept the rank brown
grass,
The far-off bleating sheep, and over there
The distant rush of waters down the pass.

Here was the inmost spirit of the hills,—
Solemn, immense, whose lonely presence fills
The heart with deep emotions strangely blent,—
The peace, their changing quietude instils,
Crossed with torn hopes and restless discontent.

And voices in my soul spake low to me ;—
'Is not the placid water's mystery
Itself the guerdon of untold desire ;
And on its cliff-bound solitudes must be
The fleeting isle, whereto thy hopes aspire ?'

Through narrow fissures, every limb astrain,
Or on the open rock, with dizzy pain,
I held to life and hovered over death ;
While the strange music rang its wild refrain,
That nerved my strength where hope scarce
ventureth.

And, at the last, I gained the very shore
Beneath the iron crags, that towered o'er
 The emerald waters, rising stern and steep,
Where lapped with mellow laughter evermore
 The refluent music of that unplumbed deep.

When Westward, scarce an arrow-shot away,
Was moored a little shallop in a bay,
 With ivory spars and damask sails bedight,
And ebon strakes, and golden shroud and stay,
 Her polished cedar decks agleam with light.

Through the cool waves I swam and reached her
 side,
And lightly laughed aloud, in boyhood's pride,
 To weigh the silver anchor and set sail
And, helm in hand, to feel the vessel glide
 Under my sole control with favouring gale.

Upon the leeward bow I soon espied
An isle engirt by blossoming orchards wide,
 With pale, flushed hues of opalescence fired,
Where dainty colours flashed on every side,
 'Neath towers grey-blue that in the midst
 aspired.

I slackened out the sheet and neared the shore,
Where flickering roundels sun-flecked o'er and
o'er

The sloping sward, all green beneath the trees;
When lo, as I drew nigh it was no more,
Naught to behold save the light, dancing seas.

Onward I sailed above the very place,
Yet every side outstretched the watery space,
Where once the isle had been and was no
more.

Below me, fathoms deep, I failed to trace
Or shoal or shallow of that vanished shore.

Was this the end of all the Harper's strain,
The end of all the waiting and the pain,
Where the slow hand of destiny holds fast
The quivering soul, and leads it to be fain
Of coming hope, yet crushes it at last?

Is this the end: the passion and the gloom,
The deeper love that sinks in deeper doom,
The mist within our souls and in our eyes,
The shadows where the rain-clouds ever loom,
And in our ears the wind that never dies?

These are the things about us at our birth :
The lonely hills, the mists, the sodden earth,
 The wailing sorrow of the sea-winds'
 breath,
And the sad coming of perennial dearth ;
 And these pursue our spirits at the death.

We move within a weary shadowland,
Where melancholy surges beat the strand,
 And all the light is fire within our clay,
And all the music we may understand
 The spell that we can never disobey.

Thus had the spirit of the wild returned,
The olden spirit of the waste, that burned
 In melancholy flames my being through ;
When lo, my wondering eyes again discerned
 The fleeting isle that shaped itself anew.

I put about and ran before the breeze,
And rounded up and anchored at my ease
 Within a little land-locked sandy cove,
Amid the silent shadow of the trees,
 Through which the winds of heaven hardly
 strove.

I loosed the silken halyards from the mast
And lashed the ivory tiller, speeding fast
 To seize the moment of propitious fate,
And in the alluring waves myself to cast,
 And stroke on stroke my longing consummate.

Thus on the threshold of desire I stood,
The fragrant air filled full with all things good,
 So near the goal of all my wandering:
And bright dream-colours of the magic wood
 Lured through my lips the joy that made me sing.

‘Light the lilt of liquid laughter,
 Sweet the silvern strains of song—
Melodies that follow after
 Longest years of lingering wrong.
When the gloomy nights are ended,
See the morning visions splendid;
Broken hopes at length are mended,
 Broken wings grow strong.

‘Why in vain to darkest sorrows
 Doth the fond heart sadly cling,
Looking but for wearier morrows,
 Fraught with woe or poisoned sting?
Lo, the flood-tides now are flowing
Whence the sullen ebb was going;
Last year’s seeds this year are growing,
 Though last year takes wing.

‘Speed, oh speed, the swiftest dances,
From your lips glad music give;
Let your soul defy all chances,
Strange, unknown, and fugitive.
Wisdom from exhaustless coffer
Beauty, love, and knowledge proffers.
What hath life but life?—She offers
Life itself to live.’

II

THE ISLE

IT was a place most glad to wander through,
Where long cool grasses underneath the trees
Hid orchid-flowers and pale anemones
And blooms of unknown hue;
Yet heavy with a strange, uncertain scent
Outpoured, mellifluously sweet,
Exceeding odorous,
As though all fragrant things together blent—
Thyme, rosemary, and scented marguerite,
With orange-blossom and convolvulus.

And all that perfume was with memories twined
Of old, delightful things, till senses failed,
As by some cold narcotic drug assailed,
That chilled both heart and mind
And heralded the swift approach of death.
Thus, as I lay and felt the fleeting breath
Departing from me, lo,
In undulating cadence, passed along
A band of lovely children, dancing slow,
With lilt of laughter and light strains of song.

And, as they saw me lying 'neath the trees,
They stayed their dances and their lute playing,
And silent stood in sorrow's pitying
Of childhood's sympathies,
Till one sweet maiden, stung by instant thought,
Brought golden fruit and laid it to my mouth
And stayed my spirit's drouth;
For, as the nectar from her gift of gold
Gave my half-conscious lips the boon unsought,
Life turned once more and stayed his loosening
hold.

I never saw a sight more rapturous
As there I lay and felt my powers revive.
In all the fashionings of things alive
The strangeliest marvellous,
Is some pure child, whose years such length may
be
That youth has gained the firmly sculptured line,
Shading the skin's fair white
With delicate nuances of delight,
Yet has not lost the wonder of divine
Infinitudes of possibility.

As strength returned they fell to play again,
And bade me join them in their frolic mirth,

Or exquisite sad dances, of fair worth
To light the grey of pain.
And there we flung the spear toward the mark,
Or whirled the circling diskos in its flight,
Or, on swift wings of light,
Ourselves fled forth with flower-caressing feet
And gladness, more than sunrise after dark,
Or draught of bitter waters turned to sweet.

Ah, they were fair, too fair, too dearly fair,
Those maidens with their shadowy, deep eyes,
And boys, with slender flanks and supple thighs
And varying muscles bare,
Shifting as clouds, blown, cirro-cumulous,
In subtle transmutations of soft shades.
And dear to me their names :
Thauma and Agapē, sweet childlike maids ;
Melissos, agile leader in their games ;
Lysis, immeasurably beauteous.

And lo, it fell that, as with flying stride
We lightly leaped a little waterway
Where gushed the eager torrent in wild play
Rock-bound on either side,
I struck my foot ; and straightway glowing red,
As flaring poppies touched by purple stain,

With stinging twinge of pain,
The blood flowed freely where the skin was rent;
And, as I paused and mused with bended head,
The children gathered round in wonderment.

Then Lysis spake: 'These things are passing
strange,

For rare such plight as thine an hour ago;
Nor ever have we seen the dark blood flow
In all the years of change.

What is this PAIN that traverseth thy face,
Whereof no knowledge darkeneth this place?
No hurt is ours, no pain,
No grief, no death, but only joy and light
And gladsome laughter, circling round again,
As follow moon on moon in endless flight.'

I gazed at him, and, as I gazed, my mind
Fled where the haunts of youth and all its days
Of joy and grief were tangled in life's maze,
Left dimly, far behind.

The dark was ever nearer than the light;
Grief mastered joy; and yet in retrospect
The memory was sweet.

How might I tell these contrasts infinite,
The malady of mortal woe dissect,
And show the marvelled mystery complete?

A land that knew not sorrow ! happy land !
Illimitably dowered past compare !
Our doom on common earth, 'mid cark and care,
They could not understand.
'Surely ye know,' I said, 'the strong desire
For that which cannot be, or come again
When fled. For THAT is pain.'
He looked at me with his great eyes of fire,
And said: 'We could not wish for what is not;
How should we then be happy in our lot?

'And yet'—and then he paused, and o'er his face
I saw the sadness of a fleeting shade—
'And yet, though otherwise our souls are made,
Down in the deeps I trace
Some knowledge, faint, of that of which you tell,
Some shivering note of passion and regret;
Not from experience,
But, even as the poet, who not yet
Himself has seen or felt through things of sense,
Still knows indeed and infinitely well.

'Yet hast thou somewhat that we cannot meet,
For ever in the struggle and the fight
The energy outpoured is some delight;
And victory is sweet.

Bravely to front the terrible unknown
In scorn of hurt, while fighting on through pain,
This is a thing sublime,
Whereto no god need ever hope attain,
Whose future lies not hid in years of time
By powers invincibly beyond his own.'

So spake he, and, the little wound forgot,
We wandered on, where splendid columns rose,
Tier above tier, in soaring porticos
Of dreamlands which are not;
Where dreaming towers of dreaming mysteries
Pierced the high dome above the vaulted blue
With age-long stones immense;
And from within there floated strangely through
Dim music and proud colours, and with these
The lure of spices and of frankincense.

Then, in an unpremeditated race,
We sped along the dromos 'neath the walls
Of that vast monument of echoing halls,
Decked in each interspace
With lordly sculpture o'er the architrave.
And as we sped, with sinews all astrain
And glittering feet,
The very air was resonant again

From our swift rushing, as the eddying wave
Swell in long cadence while its waters beat.

First to the goal Melissos sped amain,
Apollo's son, and lovelier than the dawn;
And Thaumata next, swift as some graceful
 fawn;
And after them a train
Of witching comeliness 'twere pain to see,
So wonderful the flesh-tints flushed with light
And subtly pencilled limbs;
And I was third, betwixt this galaxy
Of laughter and gay childhood, flashing white,
And Thaumata's self, whose beauty all else dims.

And when the race was o'er awhile we drew
About a whispering well of waters cold,
Begirt with iris and marsh-marigold,
Where song-birds darted through
And glorious green and purple dragon-flies.
Here Thaumata sat beside the water's edge,
One foot within the stream,
While Agapē o'erlay the shelving ledge,
Her head in Thaumata's lap, her great round
 eyes
Gazing at me, and lovelier than a dream.

These twain were fairest even of them all,
Where all were fair. My boy's heart quickened
fast,

The first time stirred by passion—and the last.
This only I recall;—

One vision and one love, and yet the same
One vision, through the years that went and came,
Still clear as in that place.

In dreams they sit—the one with wondrous eyes,
Who taught me what love was, and she whose
face

Moves my whole soul to tears and never dies.

Yet, even as we sat there, once again
The overpowering effluence chilled my heart,
And all my joying knew 'twas time to part.
The 'frail hands' gift' was vain
To fight for aye the inevitable spell.
So, with sad sighs that wound about our feet,
We turned toward the shore
And entered the close shadows of farewell
And the tense moments, where the pulses beat
In ringing ears the dirge:—No more—no more.

Thus on I went, escorted by those twain,
And as we stood where fresher breezes played,

Somewhat revived and yet most sore dismayed,
Soul-ravished in my pain,
Ere each white hand from out my holding slips,
I even dared to lift my face and plead
For one small parting kiss
From those demure yet captivating lips.
Ah, they were cool, refreshing, sweet indeed,
And every memory leads me back to this.

Then, ere the last good-bye, they gave me gifts
Of gold and inlay, set with jewels strange,
Where shadows deep mysteriously change
And coloured wonder shifts.
The gift of Thaumā was a carcanet
Of exquisite design, and from it hung
A pendant, that was set
With one enormous black translucent gem.
A boy and girl about the bezel clung,
All naked, with God's beauty clothing them.

Above, betwixt their hands, the word 'BEHOLD!'
Below, 'AND WONDER' 'twixt their feet was writ.
The gift of Agapē companioned it
In workmanship and gold.
It was a clasp upon a sliding belt,
Bright with email, niello, and inlay.

Each side a child displayed.

Below the boy, 'I GIVE,' the legend spelt;
'Neath her, 'I TAKE.' Above, the converse way,
O'er him, 'I TAKE,' o'er her, 'I GIVE,' inlaid.

As Thagma held the carcanet she spake
And smiled, as moonbeams on an autumn sea:
'Farewell, and not unkindly think of me
When you our isle forsake;
And such my gift that if, deep down, one gaze
And ask for vision of some lovely thing,
'Tis there within the stone.'
Methought—or was it fancy?—that her tone
Was faintliest regretful of the day's
Dim close and end of all our pleasuring.

I took it, and I gazed, and asked to see
The loveliest of all eternal things,
And slowly the mysterious shadowings,
Storm-winding mistily,
Resolved themselves to shape. 'Twas Thagma's
face
That looked at me from the enchanted deeps,
Where the chained spirit keeps
Its home within the magic amulet.
And at my summoning come even yet
The dark eyes, lit with spiritual grace.

I spake no word of that which I had seen
As Thaumata touched the stone within my hand.
'Hast thou the spirit that can understand,
Know'st thou what these things mean?
Here is the very zenith of desire ;—
To comprehend what beauty is indeed
And bend in lowly reverence ;
To venerate, to worship, and admire
Where nothing ministers to any need,
But each itself is its own excellence.

'Tis this the common flock will never know,
And therefore are they shut without the door
Of the high house of heaven for evermore,
Whither they cannot go ;
Nor are they banished by some stern decree,
But by themselves, since they refuse to see
Aught nobler than their mind.
Nay, for they could not see, e'en though within,
Since only can they see what in some kind
Brings profit to themselves or mortal kin.

'Whilst beauty, heaven, and every spiritual thing
Lie past the pale of profit and mere use,
Nor seek, in ends outside themselves, excuse
For their fair fashioning.

Thus, in our wonderment at what transcends
The highest good that we can ever gain,
We reach a higher plane;
Nor vainly would refer it back to us—
From the small weed, where line with colour
 blends,
To human form and things miraculous.'

One little foot drawn back, she paused and stood,
One arm, from neck to finger-tips, all white,
Flung outward, till it caught the mellow light
Flashed through the quivering wood;
While, on the fragrant breath of summer wind,
Her dusky wealth of hair flowed far behind.
Ah! from what hour we see
That beauty which all loveliness combines,
Never again for us the same sun shines,
And never will the wakened wonder flee.

'Mine is the gift of love,' her sister said,
'The gift that holds as doth this girdle hold.
Two pieces part the single clasp of gold
Where two are one instead.
Yet think not thou canst love and be the same—
Love is the very fever of desire
That is not satisfied;

For satisfaction is love's fatal shame.
For ever therefore burning with new fire
New worth is given and new worth is tried.

'Thus, in the past, full many a voyage failed
That started 'neath blue skies with favouring
 breeze,
And treasure piled in well-wrought argosies.
The port to which they sailed
They never reached. Love prospers as it gives :
When all is given love no longer lives.
When there is naught to take
No more is left that quickeneth desire :
They only who eternal progress make
Can feed the flame of love's consuming fire.

'Take thou my gift ; and when the day appears
That some sweet maiden with bewildering eyes,
Singing on siren's lips the soul's replies
To eager waiting ears,
Shall witching draw thy self's self out from thee,
Till thy heart's warden nothing would withhold,
Outpouring day by day
The stream love's thirsting never can assuage,
In that great hour give her my gift of gold,
A symbol of love's perfect amity.'

With beating heart and wide, expectant eyes
I took the shining belt, and mutely turned
To her for whom my whole existence yearned;
And swift in love's emprise
I clasped it round her softliest yielding waist,
Printing a kiss upon that snowy white
The sea-bird's bosom shames.

—['AH, THAUMA, ALL MY TEARS AND MY DELIGHT
AND ALL MY HOPES IN THEE ARE INTERLACED,
WHILE STILL I BURN IN LOVE'S REMORSELESS FLAMES.

'LOVED ONE, AH, LOVED THROUGH ALL THE HAUNTING
YEARS,
SWEET CHILD, IMMORTAL MAIDEN EVER YOUNG,
MY SHAKEN HEART, WITH ACHING PASSION WRUNG,
STRAINS THROUGH THE VOID OF TEARS;
DEAR FORM, THESE ARMS HAVE NEVER YET EMBRACED,
DEAR LIPS, THESE LIPS HAVE KISSED BUT ONCE ALONE,
DEAR HEART, THAT HOLDS MY OWN,
COME TO ME NOW, COME BACK ACROSS THE WASTE
OF LOST DAYS, BREAKING ON A LONELY SHORE;
COME BACK, MY LIGHT, COME BACK TO ME ONCE MORE.']—

In gentle voice spake Agapē and said:
'Thou dreamest of the things that cannot be;
The children of immortal destiny
With mortals may not wed.

Thou must return and pass to thine own kin,
And all these things that thou hast seen must
fade

In golden memories
On far-off sunset hills thou may'st not win,
That light thy path, slow moving into shade,
Till in the hollow night the vision flees.'

The day was nearly spent, the little wood
Looked utter black with dark imaginings,
And darker gloom lay on my spirit's wings
As there all white she stood—
So radiant, so beautiful, so pure,
With sorrow shining in her deep dark eyes.
'We know not what may be;
In the great hands of Zeus all power lies.
All things may fall to him who can endure
Nobly to brave life's undiscovered sea.

'Yet must thou take thy golden gift again,
And, if it may be, think of me no more,
Although, sweet boy, my thoughts to that far
shore

Will travel o'er the main.'
She held the clasp toward me as she spake,
And in my pain, e'en as I turned aside,

I answered her, and cried :
'Nay, thou must keep it, else my heart will break.'
Then lightly lifted she her little mouth
And kissed my brow and eased my spirit's drouth.

Into the shallow water by the strand
I stepped, and swam to where my boat lay fast.
'Farewell,' I called, 'farewell; the dream is
passed,
And none may understand
How gladness gathers only for despair,
And love, and laughter, and all happy things
End in sad vanishings.
Were it not better joy were never there? . . .
Love, I would choose a thousand years of pain
To live those few short moments o'er again.

'Child, I but crave to worship at thy feet,
All wonder-thrilled, in dearest reverence;
My delicate white flower of innocence,
I would not touch thee, Sweet.
Yet would I toil to make me fit for thee,
Storing my mind with truth, my hands with skill,
And grow continually
In ever-widening development,
And with new thoughts and aims my being fill,
Lest I should tire thee when my store was spent.

'Thy presence shall go with me till I die;
How canst thou not come with me, O Most Fair?
See, I blow kisses through the kindly air,
Winged messengers that fly
With all myself, my love, and my desire
To do thee service, cost it what it may—
Pinions that never tire.
Ah, call me back to thee.' I vainly cried.
But as I spoke the charmed land fled away—
Naught save the rippling waves on every side.

Down the dying distance flying,
Where the lonely past is crying,
 Calling memory to come,
On still wings of straightened sorrow,
Fleeing from the silent morrow,
 Where all hopes are dumb.

All the golden haze of distance,
Past the present facts' insistence,
 And the weary things that are;
All the universe before us,
No lost venture casting o'er us
 Gloom from days afar.

Memory keeps her garden golden,
'Mid blue, secret hills enfolden,
 In the land of long ago.

THE MAGIC ISLE

There the heart's one treasure lieth;
And the perfume never dieth
Where love's lilies blow.

In that garden let me linger,
Laughing at the dial's finger
Elsewhere madly moving on.
There, 'mid memory's timeless flowers,
Drink the never passing hours
Where love's days have gone.

Love, thy rowan lips are calling;
From thy gentian eyes are falling
Tears of far-off yesterday.
Kiss again the old, old kisses,
Live anew the vanished blisses,
Drive to-day away.

ISLE OF FOULA

Here endeth 'The Magic Isle.'

IN VAIN

I CRY, O Lord, for the eventless calm
Of dim still hills,
Where dews diffuse the silence of their balm
For earth's loud ills,
Where passion and the heats of struggle lie
Hushed to unending sleep,
And my defeated soul shall cease to try
Wild waters running deep.

And O, fair Lord, across some mountain pool,
The winds must play,
Whose delicate soft fingers, dearly cool,
My pains allay :
Nor shall they make low murmurs in the grass
Nor streams in music fall,
Lest those remembered moments dare to pass
I would no more recall.

And I will shut my eyes till all things fade ;
Ere some faint gleam
Of colour, flowing into lustrous shade,
Bring back my dream,

And light again the longing and desire
For that which never came
And fan the whiteness of my spirit's fire
To a tormented flame.

Yet Lord, if such as this be heavenly bliss,
'Tis not for me:
Its very peace would stir my soul to miss
The fires I flee.
Nay naught shall quench them, till my lips I wet
By Lēthē's hollow shore;
And, if it be that I shall then forget,
I shall be I no more.

CHICAGO

DOMNULA MEA, ORA PRO ME

CHILD, whose unsullied beauty seals
The limit of Time's varying hour,
As permutating change reveals
A myriad forms, for once, that dower
A single flower,

The wind breathes upward from the sea
And laughs and tosses back your hair,
Blowing your little garments free,
Outlining you as 'twould declare
How you are fair,

Limning you clear against the sky
In all your swift impetuous grace,
While keen salt airs and sunshine vie
In vain a rosier bloom to trace
Upon your face.

Small wonder, as in strange amaze,
Your charms flash through the world's dull brain,
That jealous voices muttering raise
Their sneering scandal of disdain,—
'That you are vain.'

I laugh to hear their rancorous notes,
Consumed with envious hate of you.
I laugh nor curse their craven throats,
I who have known you through and through,
And known you true.

True as yon blue 'gainst which you stand,
White as the foam in summer-flame,
You whose mere presence doth command
My soul to bend and hardly claim
To breathe your name.

Here where the sea-pinks meet the wave,
You mark perfection's dizzy height,
And all my skill must fail to grave
One single little line aright
Of such delight.

And yet, my Sweet, I know you hold
Your beauty sacrosanct, divine,
As some strange mystic cup of gold,
Deep glowing with the sacred wine
Within the shrine.

All trembling borne with humble feet
By reverent fingers, head bowed low,

And awed heart fearful of its beat
As through the inmost veil they go,
Exceeding slow.

Youth's graces fall from God's own hand,
The imprint His, not ours, they bear;
How could we fail to understand,
Or purblind pride presume to dare
To claim a share?—

The very form of God's own thought,
A jewel quick with heavenly light,
By fierce throes intimately wrought
Of Him who shaped Day's infinite
From out the Night!

O little Heart! is this not so?
O heart of love! ordained to be
A ministrant through life to go
In childhood's sweet humility,
For you, for me.

And, as some acolyte or priest,
Lift high hope's emblem from the dust;
We worship at a common feast,
Only what falls to you is just
A sterner trust.

The beauty your child-spirit tends,
From prouder spirits set apart,
Is what God's hallowed beauty sends
That shall some dream of It impart
To man's dark heart.

Ah stay and watch the fitful breeze
O'ersweep the sward with streaks of grey,
The rolling sky, the purple seas,
You, the heart's core of all the day,
Stay yet, O stay!

For I whose spirit clings to thee
Am lifted from this lower plane;
And narrow though my vision be,
Which heavenly beauty scarce may gain,
'Tis not in vain.

And when, as silver night grows late,
You kneel white-robed with soft bare feet,
Those little feet immaculate,
You in my stead my boon entreat,
Pray for me, Sweet.

EDINBURGH

THE CHILD POET

I SEE him yet, and clear the vision grows—
The slender boy with darkly waving hair.
The fire dies down, but still he lingers there,
And the voice haunts and the rich measure flows.

But he is fled, the pages idly close;
And youth will flee and all his winsome air,
The unconscious grace of every restless pose,
The boyish voice, the lips unkissed and rare.

Yet, Alan, in my dreams come back to me
And read me slow thy soft recurring rime.
Yea, though mine eyes shall know thy spell no
more.

Yet will no gift of Heaven fairer be,
When in the timeless we encircle time,
Than the dear past, unaltered, to restore.

WINCHESTER

EILEEN

THE sunshine flickers through the trees
In quaint designs and harmonies,
Bedecked with radiance golden.
The flowers nod slowly in the heat,
Their colours change with rhythmic beat,
As fluttering breezes, perfumed sweet,
Play round their forms unfolden.

I watch, as in my bower I lie,
Close shielded from the curious eye,
A pale child, blossoms bearing:
And, half asleep and half awake,
I see the dancing harebells shake,
As Eileen lightly trips to make
A garland for my wearing.

And up and down the path she goes,
While far behind her dark hair flows,
Her beauty's paleness framing,
From bluest ocean-deeps her eyes
Look wonderment's demure surprise,
Where nature's wealth of summer lies
In countless glories flaming.

So wonder, still increasing, grows,
And, wondering o'er the haunts she knows,
 She longs for prospects greater :
Perchance the high-walled barriers hide
New sights upon the other side,
Where unknown splendours latent bide
 That she shall gather later.

But twelve years raised on tiptoe-height
Can ne'er attain the wished-for sight,
 Nor have they strength for scaling.
The flowers lie fallen on the bed,
And little hands would strive instead
To raise aloft that dark-framed head,
 Still striving and still failing,

And, unlike childhood, yield to fate,
Nor fight against the obdurate,
 But lift again their burden,
And roses white weave here and there
With blooms of whiter lilies rare ;—
No childish garland, deathly fair,
 For granted wish a guerdon.

And, as she bears the gift to me,
She playful asks on bended knee ;—
 ' A boon I crave, dear Master ;

Show me what past the garden lies,
Where blue the walls of heaven arise,
And all my day-dream's paradise
Spreads vastly and yet vaster.'

But, knowing all, I crave delay
And bid her dream-winged fancies stray
Through changing seas of story.
Then, nestling closely at my side,
The dark blue eyes are opened wide
And seem within their deeps to hide
A realm of fairy-glory.

So I depict, as comes to me,
What in those tideless gulfs I see,—
Strange mermaids and wild fancies:
And, pleased my curious lay to hear,
She lends an eager listening ear,
Forgetting all things lately dear,
To hark to my romances.

The story told, there lingers yet,
Half-tinged with awe, a vain regret
For fairyland long vanished:
Gazing afar down future years,
In fields of joy or glades of tears,
No fairy pageantry appears
That this dull age has banished.

—[Yet, children, if ye could but see,
Life's fairy denizens are ye,
Love's mystery enhancing;
And little maidens with soft eyes
And shy sweet ways of winning guise
Thrill with more magic ecstasies
Than elfin lures entrancing.]—

The months, the seasons come and go,
For me so fast, for her so slow :
I too such days remember,
When through life's unsuspecting Spring
A joy illumined everything,
Till came the rude awakening,
And lo ! it was December.

The seasons find her growing tall ;
Again she seeks the garden wall
In joyous expectation ;
But, for the golden vision sought,
Beneath the slope,—all squalour-fraught,—
A scene, where vice and ill have wrought
A haunt of desolation.

I found her there, her childhood fled,
Lost in the tears those blue eyes shed :
'Eileen, the charm is broken.'

Softly I stepped and stood beside;
She understood; the tears were dried;
The great world mocked us stretching wide;
She smiled;—no word was spoken.

KILLARNEY

THE MART

IN the gay-coloured Eastern mart

 Resplendent wares are sold—
Rich spices, strange fantastic art,
 And broideries manifold.

I stood with curious gaze apart
 And watched men bid their gold.

Camels with bales of merchandise

 Thronged in from far and nigh,
And slaves with eager, wistful eyes
 Watched who themselves would buy ;
Until they placed, in fairy guise,
 A little maid on high.

Such rose-flushed limbs of joyous hue,

 Mute, serious lips and grave,
Whose pleading stirs me through and through
 To pay the price they crave !
I bought the child—what could I do?—
 And now I am her slave !

EDINBURGH

ATALANTA

I. THE STATUE

II. BEFORE

III. WAITING

IV. THE RACE

V. THE GOAL

ATALANTA

I

THE STATUE

SHE stoops to touch the apple with her hand,
And that keen flight which cleft the wind is
 stayed;
 While eddying gusts her garment's hem uplift,
Through which the fleeting breezes fluttering
 played;
Yet still in sinuous lines the folds outstand,
 Blown back about her shoulders white and
 swift.

As in the days of Hellas, vain recalled,
 She lives, she moves in marble yet again;
 Once more her restless beauty rends the heart
And fills us with unutterable pain. . . .
Ah, speak to us, who, by that form enthralled,
 Await the music of thy lips that part.

II

BEFORE

STILL is the night and clear ; I turn my gaze
Far north to where the Lesser Bear appears.
Ah, mother of my unremembered years,
Who suckled me through those momentous
days,
An untamed wildling, filled with woodland ways !

To-morrow, yea, to-morrow it will come—
The end of all my joyaunce and delight ;
Sure as the morn destroys the silver night ;
And as I turn to pray my lips seem dumb,
My strained hands falter, and my heart grows
numb.

Oh, dark on every side the way ahead !
For unknown ruin and most woeful things,
Strange, gloomy fates and deadly issuings,
Await me, so the Pythian priestess said,
If ever man should win me to his bed.

Or otherwise there runs my sire's decree :

That, save competing in the fleeting race,

Myself he should with swifter steps outpace,
And win a bride and scape his penalty.

Death's doom is his who fain would wed with
me.

Methought the black abyss of doleful death

Would bid men pause before such fate be
spun ;

And yet the grievous course hath twice been
run,

While wanton folly stole away their breath,
And prayer is vain and no one answereth.

E'en though the dreaded fates might not prevail,

And all were well, to wed I have no mind.

My passion drifteth down the hungry wind,
As oarless boats before the rising gale,
Hither and thither tossed without avail.

Sweet sister, Artemis, oh, hear my plaint :

All unrestrained I rule my life to-day,

Why should another ever say me nay ?

Why should my maiden pleasures fade and faint
In the drear darkness of a man's restraint ?

Why may men only do their deeds of might?
I too would hunt and meet the boar at bay,
Live my own life and live it my own way;
Nor in the house endure a prisoner's plight
And wait a man's home-coming through the night.

Let others care for children, I for fame
And this glad life will live, and then will die
When I have drained the cup of pleasure dry.
To suffer pangs unwished were only blame,
And slave to man or child a needless shame.

These foolish youths—ah, weak and foolish all;
For what are men to me? my heart is clear!
Love! Nay, I know not love. Love comes not
here!
But pity fills my breast as I recall
The two whose vain presumption brought their
fall.

All through that night I wept—but none must
know—
When Dion fell. For days my eyes were dim.
Yea, he was fair to see and swift of limb,
And might have won, for all that I may show;
But fear took hold on him and laid him low.

How strange we are! We cannot rule our will;
We say we will not love—and then we yield.
Nay, even I, o'erlooking memory's field,
Know something of the wonder and the thrill,
Remembering one who haunts my vision still!

So strong was he and as a tower his height,
And swifter than the wind from out the north;
But on his long last journey fared he forth
When for my sake he interposed his might
And drave Plexippos to the realms of night.

If, Meleager, thou hadst lived, I ween
Thou mightest have subdued me. Who can
tell?
For with a sister's love I loved thee well.
But dim, regretful memories float between;
And thou art gone as things that have not been.

To-morrow, yea, to-morrow it must be.
What have I done that I should lose these
things,
And this dear life, so cherished, should take
wings,
And bring the same sad bitterness to me
That other women taste in misery?

For thou, Meilanion, well I know thy face ;
Hast thou not hunted often at my side,
And know I not thy flashing feet and pride ?
Fatigue thou knewest not, nor slackened pace
As step for step we sped upon the chase.

Yet may the dread of death unnerve thy soul,
And thou mayest fail as others failed before,
That I may live the glad free life once more. . . .
Ah, what wild wish is this, beyond control,
That through another's death would gain the goal ?

The grey dawn breaks, Meilanion, hast thou slept,
Or watched the night and scanned the changing
skies,
Or prayed thy best and offered sacrifice ?
Oh, what avail the vigil I have kept ?
Oh, what avail the tears that I have wept ?

To-morrow, yea, to-morrow—nay, to-day
The cup of joy is spilt, the die is cast,
The sands that mark my maiden hours fleet fast.
Nay, let me cast my weaker self away
And once more triumph in my great essay.

III

WAITING

THE sand lies yellow and smooth and gleaming,
Clear is the light on the farthest goal ;
Here is the end of all the dreaming—
The strenuous test for body and soul,
And fate that eludeth a man's control.

Every eye 'mid those countless faces
Turns where the two stand side by side ;
Never a sound through those spreading spaces
Filled with that surging human tide :
Atalanta or death for bride.

Silence enwraps them about, and ever
The sad, tense faces are turned to gaze.
How will the Gods the problem sever,
Who can determine the hidden ways,
Proffer the guerdon, or pay the praise ?

Zeus, we adjure thee, the contest guiding,
Balance the scales to an issue fair.
See how we tender for thy deciding,
All of our hopes and our fears laid bare,
Burning thee spices and offerings rare !

IV

THE RACE

AH, beauteous maiden, tall and straight,
With wealth of flowing hair,
And melting eyes and queenly gait,
Yet with a gaze disconsolate
That mocks thy regal air.

And thou, Meilanion, sprung from kings,
Thy blanched lips still belie
The vigour in thy step that swings
So proudly, while the blue air rings
With plaudits to the sky.

What have thy heart's prayers gained for thee
At Aphrodite's shrine?
Love such as thine should surely be
Rewarded for its constancy
By wonder-gifts divine.

What holdeth he within his hand,
As from their loins they fling
Their raiment on the yellow sand,
When at the aphasis they stand
And wait the signalling?

Ah, mortal men, such sight to view
Your wild hopes never dared,
The light of godhead shining through
Such glorious limbs of radiant hue
Before your vision bared!

And Death, how couldst thou scheme to use
Thy sword to mark defeat?
For one must win and one must lose;
The Gods themselves would fail to choose
Where two such forms compete.

The signal falls, and forth they leap,
Full speed beyond the bound,
And side by side awhile they keep,
As like the rushing wind they sweep
Unfettered o'er the ground.

The midmost stēlē draweth near,
Meilanion surely gains!

When, mazed by folly, hope, or fear,
He turns to see his fleet compeer,
Who close behind him strains.

And as he turns he loses speed ;
She flashes by him fast ;
He gains—falls back—then gains indeed,
Yet half a pace she still doth lead.
The midway post is past.

So 'neath her flying feet he flings
The Goddess' gleaming gift—
The golden fruit whose glamour stings,
To stay her light foot's hastenings,
Stooping, the prize to lift.

Albeit she bends with nimble grace,
Scarce pausing as she flies ;
Yet 'tis enough, he wins apace,
And, leading in the fateful race,
Hope kindles in his eyes.

But she, to sterner struggle nerved,
Again darts on before,
And from the path had hardly swerved,
Whenso the second apple curved
About her course once more.

She leads—the turning-post is past—
She leads. Men's hearts scarce beat
As 'fore her eyes the third is cast;
Yet, hardly checked, she holds it fast
And speeds with equal feet.

And foot to foot, with level stride,
They near the final goal.
Cold hands are clenched on every side;
'Neath piteous eyelids, watching wide,
Tears fall beyond control.

'Meilanion, 'tis thy life at stake,
Thy life, thy love, thy fame;
Against herself, yet for her sake,
One last stupendous effort make
To seize the victor's name!'

The flaming heats of white despair
Consume his yearning soul;
Daring what agony can dare,
He gains—with strivings past compare—
A handsbreadth at the goal,

And falls, and lies upon the sands
Unconscious, white, and chill;

While Atalanta near him stands
With vacant gaze and listless hands,
Awe-stricken, dazed, and still.

Then slowly leaning o'er his face
She chafes each unstrung limb,
And 'neath the open winds of space
In that unnatural, still place
Awakes her grief for him.

And mournful faces strained and pale
Hear her sad threnody:
'Surely o'er death thou shalt prevail,
The sword of Thanatos must fail
To wrest my love from me.'

He hears, and opens wide his eyes
To see her bending there—
Beauty enhanced by love's own guise. . . .
A myriad voices heavenward rise
And rend the enraptured air.

V

THE GOAL

YEA, all is over now, the hour has come
Of long foreboding throes of dread,
Whose bitter fears would leave my senses dumb
In the full years now fled;
Yet the new world of love, in depth and height
And plenitude of passion infinite,
Leaves all else small and dead.

How might it be that in the past I deemed
Love's garden was a place apart,
Nor of the crown of motherhood e'er dreamed,
With children at my heart—
A gladness woven with a warp of tears—
Ours, yet not ours, and in the destined years
Past love's controlling art?

Ah, hold me in thine arms, and do not fear
To press me closer to thy side!
It is thy very strength I hold so dear.
Love's wild oncoming tide

May roll his billows and engulf me quite,
And hurl me wheresoe'er 'tis his delight,
Till he be satisfied.

Nay, kiss me once again, and place thine hands
About my head and hold it fast,
And all the dreams of other days and lands
And gracious things now past
May fade in dim oblivion's hollow caves,
Where the sad booming of her roaring waves
Drowneth all sounds at last.

Yea, whisper words of love within mine ear,
Soft, murmuring sighs of tender things,
And close mine eyes with kisses; let me hear
Those dear imaginings,
As music thrilling through my languorous veins,
Tired with fierce life and over-wrought with
pains
Of many wayfarings.

My Love, this is the very peace of pain,
The very pain of bliss most dire;
The tears of joy are hot like scalding rain;
While floods of white desire

Pour through my blood white-glowing, with more
 heat
Than the sun's midmost self, where ceaseless
 beat
The eternal flames of fire.

Meilanion, if the gods in heaven should see,
 Will they be jealous of our bliss?
In heaven's cool of calm there cannot be
 A love intense as this.
Yet though the flames of Phlegethon devour,
I would not lose thy love one little hour
 Or sacrifice one kiss.

Yea, if another should presume to take
 Thyself, and leave me desolate,
Would not the fury of my passion break
 In red, remorseless hate?
See how my hands, my swift avenging feet,
My huntress-shafts, unerringly would fleet
 The doom to consummate!

Lo! I am spent with love, yet once anew
 Kiss me with lip on lip aflame—
Kiss with the pulse of passion throbbing through
 The music of thy name;

And fast about thee let me wind my hair,
So wondrous thewed and marvellously fair,
Thy god-transcending frame!

Ah, let me drown my very soul in thine,
Sinking illimitably deep,
And yield myself, who am no longer mine,
Where love's loud pinions sweep;
Yet, hush their stir, and hold me very near,
And listen till about our love we hear
The drowsy wings of sleep.

ISLE OF FOULA

Here endeth 'Atalanta.'

CHILDREN OF FANCY

HE that mates with Fancy rears
Children for the unknown years,—
Born in joy or born in tears.

Children of the morning ray,
Children of the waning day,
What will follow ; who can say ?

Fancy sees her brood depart,
Watches through the tears that start,
Wonders with an aching heart.

Fate may guard them ill or well,
Fame no parent can compel,
Painter know or bard foretell.

So when here we leave with thee
These our children, may they be
Judged by thee most tenderly.

LONDON

AT ANCHOR

BY

MARION C. STOUGHTON HOLBORN

AT ANCHOR

I HAVE a little boat that listless lies
At anchor in the green lap-lapping sea;
The torn white wind-cloud streaks the skies,
The wind is singing in the shrouds, and we
Could sail—could sail—if you would come
with me,—
If you would come with me.

Let the deep draw you as of old, my sweet,
Far out great billows roll, the sea-bird cries—
The loose-lashed tiller jerks the sheet
That idly swings with every fall and rise,
And here my little boat at anchor lies,—
My boat at anchor lies.

Inland I hear the thrushes' amorous note
And feel the throb of Spring's awakening year.
My song leaps sobbing to my throat;
The birds are nesting in the branches, dear,
I look for you but you are never here,—
But you are never here.

For now the place is vacant at my side
Where once your pillowed head in slumber lay,
The dark night holds my tired eyes wide
And wearily I stretch myself and say,—
He will come back some day—some day,—
He will come back some day.

MARION C. STOUGHTON HOLBORN

'Ah, Love ! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire ! '

FITZGERALD'S OMAR

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